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THE TESTAMENT OF PAUL

STUDIES IN DOCTRINES BORN OF EVANGELICAL
EXPERIENCE

THE TESTAMENT OF PAUL

*Studies in Doctrines born of Evangelical
Experience*

BY J. ERNEST RATTENBURY

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FRIEND
WILLIAM BRADFIELD
WHO, MORE THAN ANY MAN
I HAVE KNOWN,
COMBINED IN HIMSELF
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WISE
WITH
THE WISDOM OF THE BABE

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FOREWORD

I GIVE my warmest thanks to my friends the Revs. T. H. Barratt and Dr. H. Maldwyn Hughes (who must not be supposed to agree with all my opinions) for their patient and sympathetic reading of my manuscripts and for invaluable counsels; to Miss L. Feasey for her illuminating comments on the last chapter of the book, and to my son, Mr. R. M. Rattenbury, whose careful and critical reading of the proofs has resulted in the removal of many blemishes from its pages. My thanks are especially due to my wife, without whose help, not only in laborious typing and indexing, but of constant co-operation in the writing of it, this book could not have been issued.

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that any man who dares to add a new volume to the immense library of Pauline literature must be prepared to give a reason for his action. When a writer makes no claim to technical scholarship, and has no light to throw on such questions as 'Mystery religions,' Apocalyptic, Textual Criticism, or the 'Koine,' and their relation to St. Paul, he lacks the justification for writing which many modern authors may legitimately plead. What defence, then, can the present writer, whose thoughts until recent years have been chiefly occupied with strenuous home missionary work, give for his book? My defence is that other judgements of Paul than the academic are necessary for a proper understanding of the man and his experience. Paul, after all, was no mere scholar, but a missionary. He did not belong to the great cloud of critics, but he ran the race.

My comparative leisure during the last five years has been largely given to reading books about Paul and kindred subjects, and I confess that, having read many scores of them, I have often regretted that no book on Paul was written by the Philippian jailer. No one can read the illuminating works of modern scholars without thankfulness for the flood of light they throw upon Paul's writings, but there are times when one realizes the inadequacy of academic judgements, and longs for the robust common sense of common man, and above all for the illumination of evangelical experience, which is a key of interpretation more important for an understanding of Paul than the learning of Baur, Zahn, Lightfoot, and Kirsopp Lake. Yes, I confess it. I have felt that the Philippian jailer might have

had an understanding sometimes lacking in the wise and prudent.

Wrede complained that many of his countrymen failed to understand Paul because they contemplated him through the medium of the groanings of Luther rather than by the method of scientific history. The historians who place Paul in the pages of history as an authentic human character unquestionably render a service of great value, but the context of religion is more important than the context of secular history for the understanding of Paul, and the groanings of a Luther are a more valuable introduction to the inner life of Paul than the brilliant scholarship of Wrede. Paul is important—no man more so—as a moulding force in the history of mankind, but the facts which make him so important are the religious experiences which history does not plumb, and often ignores. The men who have really best understood Paul have been the great penitent souls of the world who in despair have cried to God for help—Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, and the Wesleys, and their spiritual kindred. These men found peace in the religion which Paul taught them, or, rather, in the evangelical experiences of God which they shared with Paul ; and they are the men who at different times and in different ways have shaken the world. The greatest qualification for understanding Paul, then, is experience of Christianity kindred to his own. The literary methods of the scholar, no doubt, are essential for an understanding of the Pauline literature, and Christian experience cannot be substituted for sound scholarship, but it is equally true that the *religious* witness of Paul cannot be understood by literary methods, and scholarship is no substitute for Christian experience. Men who combine both qualifications are not as common as is sometimes assumed, and one is thankful for the historical works of writers such as Deissmann and T. R. Glover, whose evangelical beliefs have done as much as their historical learning to enrich their illuminating pages. ‘I know,’ says Deissmann, ‘when

I begin an academic lecture on Jesus, that there is an unacademical way to Jesus, and that it is the best way, because it is open to all.'

A writer who claims that evangelical experience is so important for an understanding of Paul may perhaps be challenged as to his own. It is at least something to be able to say that one does appreciate experimentally what Paul meant when he said, 'Who shall deliver me?' and when he said, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' If one's evangelical experience be dim as some poor farthing dip, it still may be the candle of the Lord. Perhaps in this matter missionary experience is as valuable as personal experience. For many years I have worked amongst degenerate people, and have witnessed miracles which divine grace has wrought in the souls of men and women who have had no difficulty whatever in understanding Paul's evangelical theology, and who, by the practice of it, have been lifted from graves of loathsome sin to the shining heights of the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and I have felt repeatedly, while reading learned books on Paul, that the simple experiences of such people throw a clearer light upon his letters than the words of many of his commentators.

Now this indicates the viewpoint of the following pages. Many books have been written about Paul in recent years, but very few from the standpoint of religious experience, and, so far as I know, none from the standpoint of evangelical experience. In my opinion, as I say in the later pages of this volume, Matthew Arnold's essay on *St. Paul and Protestantism* is the most valuable modern contribution to the study of St. Paul, for the simple reason that it pointed out the necessity of examining his teachings in the light of his experience. It was no doubt unfortunate that Matthew Arnold excluded from Paul's experiences the deeper mystical facts of his spiritual life which Paul himself would have considered to be vital, but, for all that, *St. Paul and Protestantism* turned men's attention from notions to facts. The

main purpose of this volume is to examine those very experiences which Matthew Arnold excluded as being outside the range of science, and to show that they were the creative element in Paul's formulation of his own dogmatic teaching. This purpose is expressed chiefly in Parts IV. and V., where an attempt is made to show that Paul's doctrines of personal and social salvation are really amplifications of his own fraternal experience of Christ and filial experience of God. The earlier pages of the book deal, in Part I., with the general question of experience ; in Part II. with Paul as an experient, particularly in contrast with the Christ whom he experienced ; in Part III., very cursorily it is true, with the course of his experience and the documents in which an account of it is to be found ; and Part VI. tries to meet the challenge which the new psychology makes to the objectivity of religious experience. My original intention was to give in Part III. a detailed account of the experiences which are recorded in Paul's letters, but I was compelled to lay the project aside, as I found that an adequate statement of these experiences would require volumes where I could only give pages, and in any case would demand a disproportionate treatment in a book of which the main purpose is to show what Paul's experiences taught him, and what they may teach us. A few notes have been necessitated by statements made in the book which seemed to require some defence, and by definitions of certain psychological terms with which some readers might not be conversant. The few scriptural references in the footnotes have been made on similar grounds. As I am incapable of wearing the armour of the academic Goliath, I have contented myself with the amateur's sling and stones, even to the extent of making New Testament quotations from English versions.

PART I

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I

EXPLANATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

I. DOGMA AND EXPERIENCE

It is often assumed in their discussions, both by critics and exponents of Christianity, that the Christian religion is a system of doctrine. Whenever such an assumption is made, the discussion, however valuable and interesting, is not really about Christianity itself, but about its teachings, and these are not one and the same thing. Christianity is primarily a life, and its fundamental facts are to be found in the experience of Christians and not in their doctrines, which were the results of reflection on experience of God on the one hand, and a general world view on the other. All true Christian doctrine has something lying behind it—and that something is the Christian religion. The term Christianity, or, for that matter, religion, is loosely used to describe its history, doctrine, and practice—but all these things are secondary. Is there not an experience which can be termed religion, *sans* phrase? We think there is, although we shall make no attempt at closer definition. Attempts to define religion, experience shows, have never yet been successful.

When it is asserted, for instance, that the discoveries and theories of modern empirical science undermine the ancient systems of thought on which Christianity is based, the statement is really confused, and is founded on a misunderstanding. Christianity itself is not based on ancient systems of thought, however much Christian theologies may be, but on an experience of God in Christ. Christian doctrinal systems have been generally founded on speculations and

theories which have been superseded by the progress of knowledge, as well as on Christian experience, but theological systems can never be equated with Christianity. There is always something behind them, and that deeper something remains when the explanation of it and deductions from it are no longer credible. 'Our little systems have their day,' but the experience of Christianity is not thereby altered, and, as long as the Christian experience remains, Christianity will survive. Whatever explanation be given of it, or whatever intellectual deductions be formulated from it, Christianity is not primarily a system of thought, but a life—a life experienced and practised.

The Christian explanation of this experience, whether the experience be direct or indirect, postulates the contact of the human spirit with Reality external to it, called by Otto 'The Wholly Other'—God. The criticism that there is a congruity between the human and divine which makes the adjective 'wholly' inaccurate is not without point, but the term is adopted as conveying an idea relatively true, though difficult to define.

This postulate has been challenged, not only by those who, lacking the Christian experience, have called alleged experiences of the kind sometimes fraud, and sometimes illusion, but recently by the new psychologists who, while they admit the facts of religious experience as valid mental phenomena, try to show that they are mental states explicable by psychological laws as purely human experiences. While this book is not written with the object of discussing modern attacks on the validity of religious experience, but rather to expound the implication of particular types of Christian experience both for doctrine and life, a few reasons are given in the last chapter for cautious examination of the findings of the new psychology when applied to Christian experience.

What is true of Christianity in this respect is in a measure true of all religion. Primitive religions were certainly not

founded on modern reasoning. Certain theories of their origin, as Durkheim¹ shows, presuppose modern ratiocinative methods of which primitive man was plainly incapable. If they were founded, as is sometimes alleged, on ancient reasoning—very modernly conceived—such as Animism, they were founded on wrong reasoning. But a system coming from the dim past cannot be explained by what moderns imagine would have been their own method of reasoning if they had been ancients. Durkheim, however, even if his own theory of the origins of religion be rejected, is surely right in his protest against some modern rationalist accounts of those origins. Religion is not founded on reason, though reason is partially responsible for its transmission. Theology is based on religion, not religion on theology; that is not to say that, in its progression, theology has not been an instrument in religious development. It is true that reasoning and experience have been combined to transmit religion from one generation to another, and that the two strands are often inextricably twined together. But, in the last analysis of all religions, there is something behind their theology—a datum, which Otto calls ‘*a priori postulate*.’ Reasoning never creates life, but only explains it. The truth is that most religious doctrine, Christian and other, depends on the fact of religious experience, however many other facts count, as certainly as botany depends on the existence of plants. And religion as such would not cease to be, if its doctrines and theories were proved to be false. All that happens is that new doctrines arise.

The object of this book, after a brief consideration of religious experience, so far as is necessary for our purpose, is to examine the writings of Paul as the typical experient of Christianity, and its greatest doctor. Protestant revivals of religion have been usually returns to Paul, because to him Christ was all in all. That great man’s teaching was founded on his vivid experience of Christ at a period of

¹ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, chap. i.

history when it was absolutely necessary if Christianity was to be perpetuated. His teaching has never been more needed than in the unsettled days in which we live. We, like Paul, can in the nature of the case only know Christ after the Spirit.

The apostle's determination to know Christ no more after the flesh,¹ but only after the Spirit, is an imperative message to an age which tends to substitute imagination for faith, and seeks to reconstruct an historical figure for our visualization, rather than to be united with faith to a living Lord. Paul's experience has been reaffirmed many times for two thousand years by a great cloud of witnesses, and the significance of it both as experience and as doctrine is incalculable for the twentieth century.

2. DEFINITION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Christianity is one of many religions, and the experience of Christians naturally has elements in common with all religious experience, although in some vital matters it is different. In what sense, then, shall we use the term religious experience? If doctrine is largely woven out of experience; if, indeed, experience is the raw material of all true religion, it is an important matter to give clearness to a term which, as Dr. Thouless rightly says, 'is often very vague.' The word experience, it hardly need be said, is not used here, as by Locke, of sense impression only, but as it is commonly used in religious circles, and as William James used it in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

For the purposes of this book much will be excluded which is often included under the term. It will be used only of positive experience of religion, of definite experience of God, of God's communication with the soul, and of the soul's conscious communication with God. It

¹ The true interpretation of the passage (2 Cor. v. 16) is very uncertain, but, whatever it is, the fact suggested by the common interpretation written above is true, and is quite independent of the particular text quoted,

will be used only of those spiritual experiences to which the experient gives definite witness. The term as used in these pages will not be vague. It will not comprehend all sorts of human experiences about religion, and of longings which are often catalogued as religious experiences. These are, after all, aspirations, but no more positive experiences of religion than unrealized efforts to reach the top of Mount Everest have been experience of the view from its summit. Much of what is called religious experience is, in our use of the term, just a failure to get religious experience.

There are certain uses of the term which I suppose would be excluded by any serious writer on religion. For instance, a man sometimes will speak about the religious experiences of his boyhood, and tell you of quite secular adventures of his Sunday-school days. There is a sense in which they could be called experiences of religion. Did not Herbert Spencer make reference to the Sunday boredom of his childhood in a Derby chapel, and has not Arnold Bennett referred to like experiences in the Potteries? It would be possible to call such experiences of religious services experiences of religion. The writer remembers a man once saying, 'I have had no experience of religion since my "compulsory chapels" at Cambridge, and I want no more.' These instances are cited to show that any chance human experience of religious institutions is not really religious experience, but one wonders, when reading James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, whether his definition was not almost wide enough to cover such cases. His famous instance of a man who 'had no God and worshipped Him' is perhaps a case in point. The use of the term 'religious experience' for any sort of human experience which has some connexion with religion, or something called religion, has given it an unfortunate vagueness of significance. It is something more than human gropings after the light, and aesthetic feelings to which no response has come from the unseen, and which are without definite divine objectives.

The wideness of William James's use of the term, however justifiable from the point of view of anthropology or psychology, is to be regretted from that of religion. The term religious experience is denuded of its value when it is made to cover all aspirations of the human spirit towards the not-self—a quite frequent use of the term. These human experiences are much better described as quests for religious experience. William James writes : ' Religious love is only man's natural emotion of love directed to religious objects. Religious awe is the same organic thrill which we feel in the forest at twilight, or in a mountain gorge : only at this time it comes over us at the thought of our supernatural relations.'¹

But can this awe in twilight be called religious experience ? It is quite true that there is no particular tear-gland for religion, nor a special heart-beat to express our contact with God ; the human organ is the same organ, whether played upon by our own emotions or by the Divine Spirit ; but the religious experient claims that, while he uses the same sort of tears under religious emotion that he uses under other circumstances, he does experience supernatural relationship with the ' Wholly Other,' and it is the experience of that ' Wholly Other,' whatever common emotional or intellectual mechanism be used, to which he gives positive testimony.

This positive experience of the ' Wholly Other ' is the religious experience meant by our use of the term. So far as the human consciousness is concerned, it is objective experience. There can be no religious experience in our sense of the term which is not objective to the consciousness of the experient. Whatever be the true account of such experiences, they will not happen if they are thought of as subjective mental states ; that is to say, religious experience as definite communion with the ' Wholly Other ' is either an experience of the soul of an object not

¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

the soul, or is an illusion, however carefully the illusion be disguised. The claim of such experience is not limited to Christians, but is true of religion generally, as Otto's *Idea of the Holy* shows, or even such a book as Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Even modern rationalistic religion such as that of Mrs. Humphry Ward is ultimately based on the same belief. Writing of Benjamin Jowett, she says: 'Through the passion of his faith in a divine life, which makes itself known to man, not in miracle or mystery, but through the channels of a common experience, he has been kindling a fire in many hearts and minds.' 'A divine life making itself known' is an impact of God on the heart of a man just as truly through common experience as through miracle. How can a 'Divine Life make itself known' unless there be some method of communication between God and man? It is often said that God is not only, or perhaps chiefly, to be found in direct mystical relationships, but in common things; but how does a man know it is God whom he experiences in common things unless God tells him so? Religious experience—positive religious experience—whether mediate or immediate, is the datum of religion, and the only datum on which we can build up satisfactory theories of the meaning of religion. Without such experience, religious thinking is a making of bricks without straw. It may not mean all that religion has come to mean, but, as William James says, it is 'the unorganized rudiments of religion.' Experience is the raw stuff of religion.

It may perhaps be objected that it is merely confusing to apply the term 'religious experience' exclusively to direct personal experience of the 'Wholly Other,' when it has been used in so many wider senses. But, without further criticism of the misuses of the term, and admitting, however much it has been misused, that its vague applications have certain current values, one has to ask what other term can be used of the *positive* religious experiences of mankind.

The term 'mystical experience' has too ambiguous a significance, and is ordinarily used of the experience of abnormal persons, and evangelical experience is equally open to objection on the ground of its narrowness. All one can do is to describe as religious experience what is the only real experience of a religion worthy the name, falling back on the qualifying adjective 'positive' for the sake of emphasis if it be needed. Religious experience might perhaps be defined as the conscious contact of the soul with the 'Wholly Other,' or of the consciousness of the contact of the 'Wholly Other' with the soul.

While in some ways we must narrow the term 'religious experience' to include only experiences positively objective to the human consciousness, in other ways we must broaden it. Dr. Thouless, in his *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, argues that there are two main ways of approaching religion besides that of experience or the empirical method, viz. metaphysics and revelation. But can revelation be regarded as different from the empirical method? It can, if by the empirical method Dr. Thouless is thinking only of one's own present-day personal experimentation; but his book deals with the experiences of others, and with analyses of them, and I infer that he is thinking generally of the religion of experience when he uses this term. But, whatever he means, revelation must be regarded as experience. It must once have been a communication of the divine received by a human soul. Revelation is only the religious experience of the past, however greatly venerated in the present. So that, on Dr. Thouless's basis of argument, the only other method of approach would be metaphysics, which, to say the least of it, gives little hope for more than a temporary philosophy of religion. The data for our study are our own personal experience and the experience of others. Revelation is the experience of God which seers of the past felt so acutely that they have transmitted it to us as God's revelation to them.

The experience of the great souls has been confirmed by the testimony of the millions of humble and obscure people who have lived their lives in the faith and obedience of God ; they have left us no written records, but they live again in lives made better by their presence, and continually swell the cloud of witnesses wherewith we are compassed about.

II

EXAMINATION OF EXPERIENCE

I. OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

OUR field for observation is twofold : (i.) Our own positive experience of the ' Wholly Other '—of God ; (ii.) The experience which others have communicated to us.

The primary importance of self-examination, of introspection, is obvious. The lack of conscious personal contact with God simply means that we cannot find in ourselves experiences which are satisfactory data for investigation, and hence we are driven to an examination of the experience of others. There is nothing abnormal in the conscious lack of religious experience, although a careful examination of certain facts—such, particularly, as conscience, and certain emotions of wonder and love common to most men—if understood, would make many men realize that God is much more accessible than they imagined. Aesthetic experience is a better guide to an understanding of religious experience—because it is experience—than psychological analysis.

A personal illustration may be excused. Thirty years ago I had no pleasure in hearing music. I went to concerts, and thought that the enthusiasms to which expression was given were often shams. I wondered whether people who seemed deeply moved by some musical performance really cared anything about it or just wished to be in the fashion. I could not see what excited them ; I simply could not understand their pleasure. It has happened that in the course of years I have learnt to enjoy some music very deeply, but the fact of my non-enjoyment years ago and my censorious judgement have made me understand how it is that people who do not enjoy religious experience should be so suspicious

and critical of those who do. Now, any one who cannot enjoy music and wants to do so will not hesitate to find out what people who find so much in music have to say about it. The non-experient of religion who wishes to experience religion and pursues a like course of action will find that religious experience, like aesthetic experience, will come by experiment. I do not mean that it comes in no other way. Our Lord's parables of the hid treasure in the field stumbled on by accident, and of the long struggle to gain the pearl of great price, illustrate two ways by which men find the treasure of religious experience. If it has to be purchased by sacrifice and search, it is certainly not less a treasure when it is found. It is an extraordinary thing that even eminent psychologists—teachers of what they boast is an empirical science—should imagine that they can be anything but second-hand authorities in religion if they have made no experiment in the practice of it. That is why Thouless was so right in refusing to pay regard to American questionnaires to psychologists on religion.¹ He rightly wanted to know what was the character of the American psychologists who rejected Christianity. And if religion is primarily life, and not doctrine, it is impossible, however irritating to non-Christian critics, not to insist on such knowledge. A man is more limited than he thinks in understanding religion, unless he tries to practise it.

The vital question to any man who wishes to make pronouncements on religion is, Have you experimented? Mere examination and analysis of other people's statements of their experience cannot have the value of actual experiment. For no other branch of empirical science would this be claimed. The chief field of observation is a man's own experience of God. Personal experience is, according to Tansley, always the chief field of psychological observation. If a man definitely refuses to follow the methods of experience which all experients suggest, he has shut himself out from

¹ Thouless, *Psychology of Religion*, p. 10.

the most important field of observation. The answer that a man does not need to be insane to examine certain pathological conditions is no answer, because the value of religion for the race is too obvious to permit it to be classified with insanity. Even Tansley says that 'it cannot be doubted that God has been a necessity to the human race, that He is still, and will long continue to be.'¹

That at least is evidence that religion is a normal and not an abnormal condition. If religion were, in its essence, a doctrine, it would be a different thing, but it is primarily a life, and, even to be accurately weighed, must be lived. While we do not argue that a non-experient has no right to express an opinion by careful examination of the statements which other men make of their experience, he must surely be at a disadvantage, because the only first-hand touch with life is by living, and the examination of statements about religious experience brings the investigator into touch with statements and concepts, but not with life itself. He cannot know the witness of the Spirit, whatever other testimony he examines. My difficulty in the enjoyment of music was, I think, caused because I continually asked myself, What does it all mean? and could find no answer which I could put into words; and it was not until I listened rather than questioned that I enjoyed it. My attitude was that of the non-experiencing critic of religion striving from an external point of view to give himself a rational account of its meaning. But I discovered that music would not be music if it could be expressed in intellectual formulas. What baffled me was the pictorial description of a piece of descriptive music on a concert programme. I felt the same movements might describe equally well a totally different series of events. I tried to construct picturesque descriptions of other works which had not been pictorially described, and I failed. I came to realize that music spoke in its own language of things deeper than words, but behind it were genuine human

¹ Tansley, *The New Psychology*, p. 161.

emotions. Is not the same thing true ultimately of religious experience?

It is natural, then, to ask why a psychologist does not use the empirical method in dealing with Christian experience. Why does he not strive to experience God in Christ by the methods experientists tell him to pursue?

The most important sphere of observation of religious experience is a man's personal knowledge of God, which is realized by practice and is life. Such a man, if he has Christian experience, finds within himself that which confirms or rejects religious experience as it is communicated by others. Walking in the Spirit, he has the witness of the Spirit.

2. COMMUNICABILITY OF EXPERIENCE

What of religious experience as communicated by others? How far can it be examined? In what ways does it come? Before we consider the complex of experience, it will perhaps be wise to consider some of the obvious difficulties in receiving, interpreting, and communicating the experience of God. The assumption underlying all genuine religion, that God and men do communicate with each other, involves certain difficulties and limitations often overlooked, especially by modern psychological writers on religious experience. A consideration of difficulties which must necessarily arise, if such a thing as direct communication between God and man exists, should be carefully given by people who deny the objectivity of such experiences, just because these things do actually happen. Some of the supposed evidences by which the conclusion is reached that religious experience is purely subjective may be really evidences of its objectivity.

On the assumption that religious experience is the positive conscious contact of the soul with God and of God with the soul, let us consider what must happen when a man

gives an account of what he has experienced. *Positive religious experience cannot, in the nature of the case, be more than partially communicable.* The mystics talk much of the incommunicability of the divine revelation, and Paul speaks about things unutterable—not merely in reference to ecstatic visions, but also about unutterable love. The fact that mystics are often unable to communicate what they see and hear makes such a critic as Leuba disdainful of the reality of their experience. But, so far from it being evidence against the objectivity of their experience, if the revelation they receive is some deep word of God, it may even be an evidence for its truth that it cannot be put into words.

Nothing is more obvious to most men who feel with any depth than that there are thoughts and experiences too deep, not only for words, but even for tears. There is nothing unnatural in a man's inability to find adequate expression for his deepest feelings. Do we not all at times feel anger or gratitude or human love which leaves us speechless? 'The emotions at their highest pass into silence,' says George Eliot. 'And silence heightens heaven,' says Charles Wesley when he tries to find a climax to the experience of the soul which enters into the glory and the music of heaven.

Man's tongue-tied inability to express his deepest human feelings is not likely to desert him when overwhelmed by divine visitations; so incommunicability may well be a genuine sign of the deep religious experience, rather than a contradiction of its objective validity.

Francis Thompson's poem 'A Fallen Yew' is a subtle and significant discussion of the inability even of those who love each other to enter into the depths of each other's lives. There are barriers between human beings which even love cannot burn away. Birds nesting in the tree, and children playing in its hollowed breast, cannot get to the real heart of the fallen yew; and their inability either to get into contact with each other or to the heart of the tree suggests to

the poet his discussion of the barriers between the most intimate souls.

But bird nor child might touch by any art
Each other or the tree's hid heart,
A whole God's breadth apart ;

The breadth of God, the breadth of death and life !
Even so, even so, in undreamed strife
With pulseless Law, the wife,—

The sweetest wife on sweetest marriage day,—
Their souls at grapple in mid-way,
Sweet to her sweet may say :

'I take you to my inmost heart, my true !'
Ah, fool ! but there is one heart you
Shall never take him to !

The hold that falls not when the town is got,
The heart's heart, whose immured plot
Hath keys yourself keep not !

Its ports you cannot burst—you are withstood—
For him that to your listening blood
Sends precepts as he would.

Its gates are deaf to Love, high summoner ;
Yea, Love's great warrant runs not there ;
You are your prisoner.

Yourself are with yourself the sole consortress
In that unleaguerable fortress ;
It knows you not for portress.

Its keys are at the cincture hung of God,
Its gates are trepidant to His nod ;
By Him its floors are trod.

Yea, in that ultimate heart's occult abode
To lie as in an oubliette of God,
Or in a bower untrod,

Built by a secret Lover for his spouse ;—
 Sole choice is this your life allows,
 Sad tree, whose perishing boughs
 So few birds house.¹

As Dr. John Hutton, writing of this poem, says : ‘ Between two human souls, however deeply linked in life, there is what Francis Thompson calls a whole “ God’s breadth ” separating them, or, as we might say, defending the personality of each. . . . There is an innermost fort which still resists the invader when all the town has yielded. . . . There is an inmost cell of the soul whose gates and bars are deep and hard to all the subtleties of love. There is a final you of you, which holds you its prisoner eternally, and from that prison which holds your final and essential life you can be liberated only by God, at whose cincture hangs the key. . . . There is an inmost core of our personality which even we have not the power to divulge completely.’

If this be so, it is clear that, where people loving each other are baffled by the barriers that separate them despite their love, there are depths in us incommunicable to others, and if God visits those depths, if they prove to be ‘ oubliettes ’ of God, how can we find words to say more than approximately and haltingly what we have experienced? Examination, therefore, of the religious experience of others, transmitted imperfectly, as in the nature of the case it must be, is plainly handicapped by the limitations of the human mind. Even psychologists assert, *when not dealing with mystical experiences*, that ‘ it is always more difficult to put into words what is most intimate and nearest to the centre of the self.’²

A favourite saying of Robert Louis Stevenson, that ‘ it takes two to tell the truth—the man who speaks and the man who listens,’ has a profound significance for an understanding of divine revelation. It applies both to the revelation

¹ Quoted by kind courtesy of Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne from *Selected Poems of Francis Thompson*.

² Tansley, *The New Psychology*, p. 214.

that man receives from God, and the transmission from man to man of that experience. We have no other lips with which to express the truth of God than human lips, and therefore all of that truth which human lips can utter is only such as the human mind can receive; and, furthermore, when it is transmitted, its intelligibility depends on the receptivity of the person to whom it is communicated. The deepest truths of God are uttered by men whose minds are imperfect and whose utterance is often halting and faulty. The human organ of revelation may be but a poor instrument, out of repair, which limits the music of the divine organist. A divine revelation may be so badly received or so imperfectly stated as even to convey a false impression. This can hardly be otherwise with God's communications to man if they are really objective, if man is anything else than an automatic machine. And in transmission to other men an experience may lose—and, in point of fact, often does—its original force. Even of God's word, then, it must be admitted that it takes two to tell it, God and man, for when it is written down it is necessarily God's word spoken through an imperfect medium.

The only theory of inspiration that can escape this conclusion is the old dictation theory, which is almost universally repudiated to-day. Man is not a dictaphone, which mechanically registers what God says. Experience of God is a human experience of God, whether it be love or truth which he experiences. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' But, even so, those born of the Spirit, whose ears catch the sound of God's voice, are those who are sensitive to it. And the sensitiveness of a human being varies from time to time, and the sensitiveness of one man is much keener than that of another. Most men are aware that in some moods the same thing is much richer in meaning than in others. A simple illustration may be found in the way in which a familiar passage of Scripture, which one has heard a

thousand times without being specially impressed by it, will one day glow with unexpected meaning.

What first were guessed as points I now know stars.

Now, the differing human moods, whether amongst different men or at different times in one man's experience, show how the revelation of God, and the experience that men have of God, will differ in intensity according to their moods. Light comes through a clean window more easily than through a dirty one, and through a large one more richly than through a narrow slit, and so the light of God, however bright it shine, will vary in the illumination received according to the quantity and quality of the receptivity of the man who experiences it. Our organs of receptivity are all influenced by our culture and tradition. Our measure of receptivity not only varies as from man to man, but is imperfect and partial in the best of us. People do not receive the same impression from the same things for the simple reason that people themselves are different. I wonder how many men would have seen the burning bush if they had been present with Moses that day. When Paul was converted, his companions heard a noise, but he heard a voice. Professor Eddington has shown that a physicist from another world on Armistice Day might think he understood the two minutes' silence by comparing it with the two minutes' darkness of the total eclipse of the sun, and express his views in the terminology of light waves and sound waves, whereas he would not understand, nor even imagine, all the meaning of that awed reflection and sacred recollection which was its deeper explanation. Different people express, in the terms of which they are capable, their impression of the same things in different ways. The God experience of a man receptive of the divine meanings is the deepest of realities, but is often misunderstood by 'the wise and prudent.' When God speaks to men through men, it is obvious that the divine word mediated by a purely human

medium may be distorted. That a man who is an experient of God may find it very difficult to speak what God has said to him may be illustrated from the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus, as, for instance, when they misinterpreted what He said about destroying and building up the Temple in three days. If what comes to an experient is some great and unexpected revelation of God, he may well wonder whether he understands what has come to him. But even more important, in addition to his understanding or his interpretation of his experience (which, after all, in an experient will be largely true), is his difficulty of expression. With what vocabulary can he speak the experience which in some ways is incommunicable? New and original experiences are not easily put into words. The experiences of common men are interpreted to them by the experience of others, and they find words through other lips; but great and outstanding experiences of God beggar the experients who try to express them. Notice how Paul, in Eph. i., labours for words to express what he sees in the power of God—he piles one word on another; or when he talks of Christ's love in the third chapter, the last word he can say is—and it is the most effective—that it passeth knowledge.

Furthermore, the experient, even if he has words, wonders how far they will be of use to the people to whom he is talking. Paul, in 1 Cor. iii., refuses to talk wisdom to babes, and his valuation of the intelligible is to be seen in his rather cynical tolerance of tongues.¹ His determination to get people to say things that will be intelligible is remarkable. How can experients of high and holy things, on account of the defects both of the receiver and transmitter of the divine truth, and those to whom they transmit it, always succeed in making their deepest experience plain? Incommunicability, or partial communicability, is certainly no conclusive evidence that alleged objective religious experiences are really subjective. What is quite clear is that experients fall

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 5.

back on such language as can best serve their purpose. Jesus, who of all men was the greatest experient of God, dwelling as He did in His bosom, had experiences which He could not communicate to men as bald narrative of fact, because they could not have received them. The story of the temptation was conveyed by a series of pictures and metaphors, because no man could really understand our Lord's temptations; they would not have been temptations to men who were fighting evil at so much lower a level. And in general He employed metaphor and parable to make the deep things of God known to men, and then realized that, 'having eyes, they see not, and ears, they cannot hear.'

This, of course, has an important bearing on revelation and its progressive character. Every revelation is some man's experience of God. Moses or Isaiah or Hosea, so far as they can within the limitation of their receptivity, culture, and vocabulary, tell of experiences of God in their own souls. Some of these experiences were not very vivid; some were. The revelations of the Old Testament were very different from the final revelations of God in Christ. He was the Light of the World. Earlier revelations were just patches of colour—'here a dart of red, there a dart of blue'—but Christ is the Light of the World. He is the synthesis of these separated colour-patches of revelation. For instance, to say God is a jealous God is to make a statement which our age repudiates; but was it not an ancient way of saying He is love? Love as people of earlier days knew it was primitive and jealous. What if they could not dissociate in their minds love from jealousy? What if they thought of love as the terrible love that the primitive man had for his wife, which brooked no other man's attention to her? They thought of Israel as the bride of Jehovah, and could there be a much better way, under such conditions and in such a culture of teaching the power and reality of God's love, than by declaring that He was a jealous God? What

would have been the use to that age of an abstract phrase such as ' God is love ? ' The metaphor of the jealous husband seems almost grotesque and very dangerous to the modern mind, but was the primitive Hebrew mind capable of being prepared for Christian revelation in any better way ? It was a great revelation to know of a divine love, a personal love, which at that early stage of human civilization cared passionately for humanity, and it is just so that God has made Himself known to men. God got through a chink, as it were, in the wall of human personality here and there, until men more capable of receiving Him found themselves surrounded and gladdened with ' The Light of the World.'

3. ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS

The foregoing section has dealt with the obvious subjective difficulties of an experient of religion in receiving, registering, interpreting, and communicating his experiences of the ' Wholly Other.' It now remains for us to consider religious experience as actually communicated to us by others, and documented for us. It is of importance to remember that accounts of experience when regarded as data for study are not experience, but the expression of experience. Experience of religion is life and not thought. Religion is life, and real religion is never touched by people who only examine it as doctrine or concept ; real religion can only be lived. When religious experience is reflected upon and expressed conceptually, it has passed from life into formula. That is not to say that formula is useless for religion, or that it cannot be a channel of it, but it is no more religion than a man's portrait is the man. A bucketful of water can be drawn from a dancing rivulet, but when the water has been analysed and shown to be H_2O the running stream has not been captured. Not even as much as that can be done with living experience. All that can be done is to examine the experient's account of it ; and the greatest of poets, with all

his skill in expressing pure experience by the incantation of magical words, is only a great artist doing with poetry what another man does with his pencil. Experience must be experience to be known, and much the best key to understanding the experience of another person is kindred experience.

For instance, Paul said, 'It pleased God to reveal His son in me,' and gave an account in a few words of one of the most notable events in human history. Well, there you have a succinct account of a spiritual experience conceptually expressed. A man who has known in his own life something of the same sort can to some extent enter into Paul's words with sympathy. But what can those words mean to a mere impartial observer who has never had such an experience, and does not even think it possible? What can he know of the glow, rapture, and wonder which remade Paul's life and vitalized his mind, and transformed him into the dynamic personality he became? He may admit all such statements as facts of human experience, and regard them as solid data for investigation, but, without some like experience, however able he is he cannot and will not understand. He simply writes of a world of which the inner side, shut out from his experience, is in its truest significance shut out from his understanding also.

It is important that any investigator of another man's religious experience should realize that the statements of experience with which he is dealing as data are necessarily removed some distance from the man's crude experience of the 'Wholly Other.' The experient himself can only receive experience from 'Outside' through the medium of his own mind. Such an experience is often emotional, but, if expressed in words, must be expressed as a concept. It is not easy, for instance, for an experient to express satisfactorily, even to himself, the overwhelming presence of God, which is a common fact of religious experience. Not only do his words fail him, but his thoughts. Experiences of God (which, although self-evident to an experient, are even to his

own consciousness often beyond his thought) are obviously more difficult to communicate to others. Hence the experient falls back on metaphor. The experience, when set down on paper, is not experience, but the expression of the experient's imperfect concept of an experience by means of metaphor. When such 'experiences' are regarded as data for psychological analysis, the psychologist is really dealing with diagrams and not with facts. The religious experience which a scientist examines is a complex concept of expression and experience. How far is it possible to isolate the experience?

Experience of God when experienced is not expressed as pure experience. The white radiance of eternity is always stained, however gorgeous the colours by which it manifests itself. When experience comes to us through the medium of human minds it is no longer white. It is the expression of a complex of which the vitalizing factor is experience. G. O. Griffiths, in his able book on John Bunyan, writes of the 'irritating sophism which spins gossamer platitudes about the distinction between dogma and experience.' He does not suggest, he says, that, 'whilst Bunyan's beliefs have gone, his experience could ever be independent of his belief. It is to say that Bunyan's central faith remains.' That, of course, is true—Bunyan's experience, like most experience, was complex; but he would have had no central faith apart from his experience. Different doctrines, a century after, held by John Wesley did not destroy the *common* faith of Bunyan and Wesley. *Grace Abounding* shows clearly enough that Bunyan could not have retained his notional beliefs if positive experience had not come to him. Is there no valid distinction between 'beliefs' and faith? It is certainly no purpose of this book to suggest that beliefs and dogma do not matter as long as experience remains, but, rather, on the contrary, to assert that doctrine is grounded on a complex of experience concept and expression of which experience is the vital factor.

Experience, then, as data for investigation can only be examined as a complex of experience and expression, and, except by experimenters and experiencers of religion, only as concepts, formulas, doctrines, deductions, myths, customs, worship, sacraments, and the like. The mixed character of these data varies from direct accounts of religious experience in which the fact is plain enough to abstract dogmas and superstitious customs, where the experience is often almost smothered and can only be discovered by careful searching.

The religious experience which we shall examine is purposely limited in quantity. But it is just as true of this, as of any other, that the experience is complex. When it is regarded as data for scientific examination the investigator must not forget that the concepts by which it is expressed can never give the results that empirical investigation can give, although they can give valuable results, especially to those who confirm them by experiment.

Our examination of experience-concepts will assume that behind them lies valid experience. The value of that experience as evidence of religion, and for the construction and affirmation of doctrine, can be realized in several ways. The first thing, of course, is so far as possible to isolate experience from its expression-complex. When we examine religious teaching we must try to discover what is the traditional opinion of the speaker, what his mode of expression, what is his culture, or what purpose he has in speaking, whether he is quoting the scribes or speaking with authority, and so we may or may not get to experience. If we examine a religious custom we shall find in it, no doubt, traditional practices transmitted from one generation to another, but we may well ask whether it responds to any human need, and, if we find a need answered by it, we shall come to human experience, and even human experience of the divine, and we shall find that the deadest customs were alive once because some man somewhere had a vision of God. We may take religious writings, particularly the Bible, and

analyse some passage of Scripture, and inquire what is metaphor, what is quotation, what is interpretation, what is experience ; and we shall find in some cases that expression has been so mingled with experience that we cannot separate them, but that the complex of experience and expression have had the power of all great poetry of re-creating experience.

There are two practical ways of 'isolating' religious experience from the complexes by which it is expressed :

(i.) *The discovery of a common factor in the religion of people who hold different opinions.*

(ii.) *The discovery of the differentiating factor in the religion of those who hold the same opinions.*

(i.) What is the common factor in the religion of people who hold different views? A devout Roman Catholic and a devout Methodist hold views in some respects diametrically opposed, but both can sing :

Jesu, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast.

The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.

The reason is that in such a hymn both have delved down to the common experience which breaks down or undermines middle walls of doctrinal and ecclesiastical partition. The differences between Christians are slight compared with those which exist between Christian and heathen, and yet, however various, religious convictions common to all can be found, and in no sphere more plainly than that of mystical experience. However wide the field of investigation, it will be discovered that there is a common sense of what Otto calls the 'Mysterium Tremendum.' The clarion claim of conscience (even although standards of judgement differ) seems constitutive of human nature as we know it, and can only be

satisfactorily explained as in some sense a reaction of the human soul to the 'Wholly Other.' Whether or no that statement be accepted, it is clear that there is a large volume of common conviction amongst men holding widely different views, which they themselves explain as religious experience.

(ii.) In Christianity, an interesting evidence of experience of God and its meaning can be arrived at by an examination of the people—experients and non-experients—who hold precisely the same doctrines, and yet vary in life and practice. And different periods of life of experients, though there is no change of doctrine, are equally illuminating. An examination of these instances will show that it is not so much notions or doctrines which control a man's action as something deeper and different—in a word, life and experience. A good instance is that of the Wesleys. They held doctrines rarely disputed by the people to whom they preached, but what a difference was seen in the men who experienced their truth and the men to whom they were just beliefs.

The personal experience of John and Charles Wesley is, from this point of view, amazingly interesting. They were, for the decade before their evangelical conversion, men entirely in earnest, seeking after God with even sacrificial devotion, but they were spiritually impotent. In the period before their evangelical conversion, and in the period after, there was no difference in their doctrinal beliefs, except in so far as their experience led to a more lively formulation of certain doctrines. Even their sacramental practice—that of strong Sacramentalists—did not vary, and John Wesley said, as late as 1788, he had seen no cause to change his opinion. Their desire to do good was not greater after their conversion than before it, as any reader of the *Georgia Journal* knows. In the ten years before 1738, John Wesley was a failure ; his work was largely fruitless ; but when he

entered into a definite experience of the grace of God, notwithstanding his continued belief in his old doctrines, he became a flame of fire in England and a happy Christian man.

What makes this even more interesting was his conviction of the truth of Peter Böhler's doctrine of 'Salvation by Faith.' This was not a common teaching of Wesley's day in the Church of England, although it was stated in her formularies. Wesley was convinced by Peter Böhler of the truth of this doctrine, but even after his conviction of its truth, and though he preached it, he was powerless to do any good up to the date of his evangelical conversion. He only irritated people, and helped no one. When he experienced the grace of God by faith, and underwent a conscious emancipation of spirit, all was changed, and he became a joyous, conscious child of God, with an influence on the lives of men rarely equalled in Christian history.

The same thing, of course, happens with lesser men than the Wesleys, and does really take place where men make experiments in the way that experiments point out to them. The difference in life which experience makes, even when doctrines do not change, is a fact which shows the reality of experience. Something extra is added, and that extra can be isolated as a fact for scientific observation.

In conclusion, it is worth while reasserting that, however truly religious experiences may be isolated from their complex and regarded as data for scientific investigation, the only satisfactory method of evaluating them is by experiment. External investigation of life, however searching, is different from living, and inferior to it. Experience, then, we claim is the residuum of religion when all other states of the complex are removed.

The main object of the following pages is to state the facts of the inner life of a great Christian experient, St. Paul, and to show how his main doctrines were shaped chiefly through his vital experience of God in Christ.

PART II

THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

(PAUL AND JESUS)

III

PAUL: CHRISTIAN EXPERIENT

I. INTRODUCTORY

THERE are common elements of experience of God amongst all men who have felt the touch of the 'Wholly Other,' and Christians, even apart from their distinctive Christianity, share these experiences of God in their inner life, as well as in their ethical intuitions. To this extent they validate the experience of non-Christians, and, in turn, Christian experience is validated by that of men of other religions. But, although the term 'Christian experience' is inclusive of the most vital experiences of other religions, it expresses more particularly the special experience of God in Christ, unique in character, and central both to Christian life and Christian thought.

No man who is the child of Christianity can escape, even if he wish to do so, from the historical consequences of the teaching and witness of Jesus. Our Lord's teaching about God expresses His experience of God. By common consent, Jesus was the greatest of all experients of God, and His teaching and experience are as nearly one as teaching and experience can be. The Son of Man who had not where to lay His head always had one dwelling-place—the bosom of His Father—and speaks as one who was in closest touch with the very heart of God. He has revealed the Father, revealed God as Father, and has taught all men to say to God, 'Our Father.' Man's conception of God—the God idea—has been richly coloured for children of the Christian civilization by our Lord's teaching—His experiential teaching—

about God, and even more, perhaps, by His vital manifestation by His own life of what God is. Christians visualize the character of God as like Christ's. We see the Father in the Son, who, we know, 'favours'—'takes after,' as we say in common speech—His Father. And it is indisputable history that the life and teaching of Jesus have so enriched men's conception of God that something has been permanently added to the idea of what God is. When God is conceived as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, we do not merely think of Him by means of a new metaphor, but we affirm a true relationship between God and man—a paternal and filial relationship. God's Fatherhood, however anthropomorphic our actual uses of the term, is reality, not metaphor. The relationship of Jesus to God was so self-evidencing that we cannot but accept it. This enrichment of the idea of God is not only a permanent possession of Christian civilization, but has profoundly influenced Christian experience. Christians think of God, when they think Christianly, not as Creator or Force, but as the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, and our Father in heaven.

It may be argued that this is not direct experience of God, but only the acceptance of an idea about God, or a notion which illuminates the idea of God. Granting that Jesus had a direct experience of God, all that we do is to accept that experience as He expressed it ; that is to say, our minds are enriched by a better notion of what God means, and for many Christian men that is true. But even then it should be remembered that Christian experience confirms this conception of God, and that Christ said to those who came to Him for rest that 'no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and him to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'¹ Here we reach a level of experience distinctly higher than 'notion' or 'idea.' Jesus did really reveal the Father to those who came to Him, and that

¹ Matt. xi. 27.

experience continues. The Christian experience of God is not merely something that came historically through the words and works of Jesus. Jesus wills to reveal the Father to the inmost soul of men, and He has revealed Him to those in whose spirits His own spirit cries 'Abba! Father!'—for the Christian experient knows Jesus Christ not merely as the historical person Jesus of Nazareth, but as one who lives and becomes the very life of the man who trusts Him. He finds God 'in Christ' not merely through Christ. Christ has to him the value of God, and there is no value of God but God. That has been the claim of the Christian experient in all ages of Christianity, and our concern is with the testimony of the men who make that claim. 'We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses.'

It would be quite possible to call up many Christian experients as witnesses, and, for that matter, to call to witness the Church of two millenniums, with her claim, under whatever different forms, of the real presence of Christ; but, our attention will be confined to one typical witness—the Apostle Paul.

His experience will be examined as a cross-section of the tree of Christian experience. St. Paul was the first experient of Christ after the Spirit who wrote down his experiences, and he quite definitely identified the Christ of his vision with the Jesus whom the other apostles had known in Galilee.

Messiah died for our sins,

According to the Scriptures;

He was buried and was raised the third day,

According to the Scriptures.

He was seen by Kephas, and then by the twelve;

Thereafter He was seen by five hundred brethren at one time,

Of whom most survive even unto now;

But some have slept in death.

Thereafter was He seen by James

Then by all His apostles.

And last of all by me too, as it were by His child untimely born

was He seen. Yes, I am the meanest of His apostles ; I, who do not deserve to be called an apostle, I who once persecuted the Church of God. It is all through the grace of God that I am what I am.¹

Paul uses the terms Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, the Lord and Christ, interchangeably, and means the same being whenever he uses them, as Catholic and Evangelical faith has always done. In about one out of three of the instances in which he refers to Him he calls Him Jesus or Jesus Christ. And often when he calls Him Christ, or the Lord of Glory, it is in passages which imply His earthly humiliation, such as ' Christ crucified ' or the ' sufferings of the Lord of Glory.' It will be shown in the sequel how far-reaching his Christian experience has been in its influence, and how valuable his teaching, vitalized by experience often gushing out of it like water from a spring, has been and is for the human race ; and his experience and experimental teaching will be examined especially with a view to the present age, than which no age has more acutely needed his message.

The importance in Christian history of Paul's experience of God in Christ cannot be exaggerated, not only on account of its quality, but also on account of its timeliness. Such a man, with such an experience, humanly speaking was necessary at that time for the world-wide development of Christianity.

2. PAUL THE MAN

Many people, within and without Christianity, dislike Paul. They feel, at least subconsciously, that he does something to vulgarize the beauty of his Master. Contrasts are common between the sweetness of the Galilean and the hardness of the great apostle. The exquisite fragrance of the flower-like life of Jesus is not to be found in

¹ Cor. xv. 3-10 (*A. S. Way's translation*).

the strenuous town life of Paul. The atmosphere of rural Galilee was fresher than that of the Roman cities in which Paul loved to toil. The limpid simplicity, the indescribable charm of Jesus, belong to a loftier world than that of the controversies, strained rabbinical arguments, and turbulent strenuousness of Paul's epistles. 'Jesus was a seer, Paul an advocate.' That no doubt is largely true, and St. Paul would have been shocked to think any one would have expected it to be otherwise, although it may perhaps be asserted that men who cannot find the grace of Jesus Christ in some of Paul's writings are just blinded by sentimentality. There is a beauty in the Epistle to Philemon, for instance, which is the beauty of Galilee ; to say nothing of the hymn of love, and many another passage which is fragrant with the very sweetness of Jesus.

But there always have been people who have said, 'Back to Jesus.' That was true (although their meaning was different) of the Jewish Christians and the Jesus party in the Church of Corinth. If their very natural sentiment had prevailed, it is more than doubtful whether Christianity could have persisted. Paul, or some man like him, was apparently necessary for the fulfilment of the divine purposes in the world. History of what Christianity would have been without Paul, like most speculations about things that never happened, is more interesting than illuminating. What concerns us is not what did not happen, but what did, and it is plain enough that Paul was the man under God who made Christianity into a world religion. He is the human bridge between Jesus the Galilean and the universal Christ, between Jesus after the flesh and Jesus after the Spirit, and it was his experience of God in Christ which (to speak after the manner of men) built the bridge.

For this work Paul was fitted because he was a great personality obviously destined, from his birth, for his life mission. He was a man of first-rate intellect ; that his teaching was coloured by his education, the education of a

Jewish rabbi, makes no real difference to his intellectual force and significance. Effective men are always men of their own day. The immediate cogency of their thinking necessitates their use of contemporary thought and speech forms. Men like Francis of Assisi, John Wesley, and St. Paul, though pilgrims of eternity, were mirrors of their own times. If they had not been men of their periods they would have lacked the concreteness which made them effective, and they would have become vague and inept. It is easier to get at the real thoughts of a man when they are expressed in the fixed dialect of his times than in any other way. Paul's literary power, however colloquial the Greek he used, is acknowledged by such a master of Greek as Gilbert Murray, who found in Paul's hymn of love a literary masterpiece unequalled in the Greek tongue for centuries. Paul's intellect, was not that of the academic; the academic mind so often engaged in interpreting Paul's writings has sometimes been a poor instrument for interpreting the apostle. Paul had none of the coolness and aloofness of the academic ideal. His words are flames, not icicles. The weight of all his tremendous personality is behind his most trifling saying. He uses the Nasmyth hammer to break the nut. He is not one of the world's calm witnesses, taking notes, but one of the world's greatest doers, using language as another man uses weapons, in his fierce conflict with principalities and powers in high places.

His course impetuous who can tell?
While battling with the infernal foe
He puts forth all his strength and zeal,
He spends his life at every blow!

That early picture of Paul stalking into Iconium is too vivid to be untrue—the man of medium height, bow-legged, with furrowed brow, long nose, and meeting eyebrows, with sparse curly hair and blue eyes, sometimes having the appearance of a man, but sometimes looking like an angel.

One can see the stocky, powerful figure of the man setting his feet firmly on the ground—that man with strong nose and knit brows, never to be trifled with, and yet, when the blue eyes light up, a man with the face of an angel ; and so he strides into Iconium and strides over the world.¹

‘ Sometimes having the appearance of a man ’—human to his finger-tips, often faultily human, passionate, sensitive, sharp-tempered, indignant, his blue eyes under knit brows at one moment flashing like lightning but at another suffused with a mist of tears. He was gentle and tender as a child—when tenderness was needed. He was a fighting, struggling human being, conscious of his weakness, striving for something better, defending himself against attack, always fighting a good fight, but he lacked the divine exaltedness of Jesus, the ‘ Wholly Otherness ’ of Jesus. ‘ The soul of Jesus,’ says Peabody beautifully, ‘ was like a star, and dwells apart ; the soul of Paul is like a man groping his way through the dark, who looks up to the star and is shown his path.’ Jesus evoked, even when He was on earth and men only knew Him as man, something like worship, certainly adoration ; but Paul as a rule called forth no such devotion, and, when pagans would have worshipped him, he rent his clothes.² Sometimes Paul has been accused of egotism, and in certain senses rightly, but it must not be forgotten that his was a Christo-centric ego—‘ I live, yet not I, but Christ.’ Paul was interested in himself. He would have lacked discernment if he had not been interested in the man who has interested the world ever since, more than any man of that day. He was an erring man, but a man of unsurpassed personality and brain-power, and his adventures, courage, afflictions, stripes—the tribulations in which he gloried—and his steady persistence against opposition of foes and friends alike, assured his place amongst the world’s great men, and few even of his enemies would affirm that earth has produced a more heroic spirit. Wherever this ugly

¹ See T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*, pp. 191-2.

² Acts xiv. 14.

little Jew is seen amongst men, he is dominating, central ; like a Colossus, ' he bestrides the narrow world.'

It seems strange that the earliest documents of the Christian religion should be just a handful of letters. Some of Paul's letters we know have perished, and it is intrinsically probable that he wrote many others of which we know nothing. That some of his letters would become ' Holy Scriptures,' to be read for thousands of years by all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues, can never have entered into his mind. Hence he was an unconscious instrument of the ' Holy Spirit,' and yet, when we reflect upon it, what better instrument could have been chosen either to fulfil the purpose of God or to preserve the memory or teaching of a man ? It is doubtful whether a more vivid picture of a personality has survived from ancient times than that which Paul in his letters unconsciously painted of himself. The value of frank personal letters, to use a vulgarism, is ' that they let the cat out of the bag.' Paul, who, like Oliver Goldsmith, ' gave his life away in handfuls,' gave away with his letters more things worth having than he knew. He gave himself away, and enriched the world with his gift. The witness of Paul to the power of Jesus Christ, who lived again in him and dominated him, is much more impressive through the very casualness with which he gives it.

His letters were written, for the most part, out of pure affection for his people, in order to prevent scandal, undo mischief, defend himself from unjust criticism, deepen the affection between himself and his converts, but always with the supreme purpose of building up the infant communities in the love of Christ. These personal letters, often passionate and vehement, were marked by the incaution of a man who did not weigh the effect of his words on his reputation (' Do I please God or men ? '). They were sometimes seasoned with stinging irony,¹ and quite abusive of the

¹ 2 Cor. xi.

mischievous persons who were interfering with the work he had done,¹ but, for all their passion, they overflowed with affection, were extraordinarily self-revealing, leaving behind them the vivid picture of a passionate, earnest missionary : a God-intoxicated man, who not only felt keenly but thought deeply, who was capable of mystical vision with the most visionary and yet exercised a discrimination cool and detached when need was ; a man who had endured hardships, but actually found in their memory his richest reward—they too, were a cross in which he gloried²—a man of unparalleled industry and energy, of a courage unbreakable, who felt himself the instrument of destiny, driven forward by a divine passion which constrained him—not a passion which originated in his own mind, but one which seized and gripped him from without, and drove him forth. ‘ Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.’ His letters were no small part of his apostolate, but, effective as they were and powerful as they remain, they were probably often the product of a moment, and in some instances quickly dictated. His words were like the lava stream of a volcano. His secretaries should be numbered amongst the world’s unsung heroes.

It is important to realize the dominating qualities of the intellect and spirit of Paul’s dynamic personality. But what is more important for an understanding of Paul is to see that he was never a master, but always a servant—a slave, as he loved to call himself, of a contemporary. If Paul is to be called an advocate in contrast with Jesus the seer, who would have been better pleased than Paul to be the advocate of Jesus, although he remembered he was a slave too, and never forgot his chains and the marks branded on his body ? Whether Paul ever saw Jesus we do not know. It is quite evident that he had no intimate intercourse with Him, in the days of His flesh. If he had known Jesus, his relation to those who had actually accompanied the Lord must have been different, but such a knowledge he never claimed. On

¹ Gal. vi. 12 ; Phil. iii. 2, 3.

² Rom. v. 3.

the whole, we conclude that it is just possible, but not likely, that he saw Jesus. If he was in Jerusalem when Jesus was there, which is perhaps probable, Paul was too much alive, one would think, to have been uninfluenced by the repute of this Galilean prophet. But he may not have been there, and, dubious as the argument from silence is, it is unlikely that he would have made no reference to the fact if he had seen Him.

Perhaps, if he did see Him, it was so that he recognized His face when he was on his way to Damascus and Jesus spoke to him, and 'that one face' may have haunted him when he wrote that 'God shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The great light on the way to Damascus showed him the face of Jesus, and there is a slight possibility that he may have recognized it. But Jesus the man of Galilee he did not know, and never professed to have known, even if once or twice he saw His face, until He, arisen from the dead and living, spoke to him.

But this 'tremendous human' was entirely dominated by Jesus; he was his bond-slave. Does history record another instance of a powerful and educated personality who was willing to remain the slave of his peasant contemporary—to be dragged, as it were, a prisoner in the triumph of another?

'Dominated by a great idea,' say some of his biographers; but, if it was only a great idea and nothing more, it was a great illusion, and, in consequence, this man, amongst the greatest influences of the world, was the victim of a hallucination, and yet, on account of that very hallucination,¹ has wielded an influence for two millenniums much greater than the sanest of persons has exercised, which really would prove that life is sound and fury, signifying nothing. No! he was dominated by a person, by a contemporary historical

¹This word throughout this book is used in its popular sense of delusion or illusion.

person, who had been crucified and who lived again. With that person he had intimate intercourse ; he professed to know His mind, and expressed that mind to those who had been His companions in the flesh, but knew Him less well than Paul, who only knew Him in the Spirit. And the evidence that he knew Him is stamped upon his writings. Paul's words have not the poetic beauty of the words of Jesus, but they are the thoughts of Jesus put into more prosaic form.

There is much written to-day on the influences which moulded Paul's thought—the rabbinical methods of argument he pursued, the vocabulary he borrowed from the mystery religions, and the problem whether or no he adopted some of their soteriological notions. He was a man of his own age, a citizen of the world who could not have influenced his world unless he had been its child ; and he was one who, furthermore, deliberately made himself all things to all men that he might save some ; but can any sane man think these were the formative forces of Paul's mind ? Paul was dominated only by Jesus, whose willing bond-slave he was. 'Christ is all in all.' '*To live is Christ.*' The central figure of all his teaching and life was Christ Jesus his Lord. What would happen if one of Paul's lost epistles was discovered, say, in the excavations of Herculaneum, and it was anything like the letters we have all read ? Would any one say, This document is the product of the mystery religions or rabbinism ? The first thing apparent would be that it was a Christian document. His ethical precepts, even if they made no verbal quotations from Jesus, would immediately be accounted for by the Sermon on the Mount, as for instance Rom. xii. must be. Paul was dominated by Jesus in every sphere of his activity, mental and practical. Indeed, any one who read him for the first time, but was only familiar with the Gospels, would be amazed that an educated man of such striking personality should be so completely dominated by a contemporary Galilean peasant. Mr. H. G. Wells has

informed us that his idea of God is similar to Paul's idea of Christ. The comment of C. H. Dodd is worth quoting : ' The chief specific difference between the two men is that Paul's Christ bears the definite ethical lineaments of the historical Jesus, and, unlike Mr. Wells's " Invisible King," He has a real and intimate relation to the whole universe and its creator.'

3. PAUL THE LINK

The enormous importance of Paul's life and witness for our own days is often overlooked. Paul is the literary link between the Christianity of those who looked upon Jesus with their fleshly eyes and the Christianity of those who ever since have known Him by faith, and whose intercourse has been with a really present though an invisible Saviour. The great value of Paul's knowledge of Jesus is that it is the only sort of knowledge we can have of Jesus to-day—the only sort of *direct* knowledge. The other apostles had direct knowledge of Jesus—the knowledge of those who had known Him as a friend, shared His human companionship, felt the touch of His hand, listened to the unforgettable tones of His voice, experienced the tragedy of His death, and been intoxicated with the joys of the first Easter—but their knowledge can never be ours. And, with all their intimacies, they confessedly failed to understand Jesus; for, although it is true that it was given to them to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, it is also true that with all their more apparent advantages they were often of the men ' who, having eyes, saw not ; and ears, heard not.' Paul's knowledge of Jesus was different ; it was not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The slight possibility of his having seen Jesus when he was a student at the Rabbinical School of Jerusalem, makes no difference to the fact that he had no acquaintance with Him of the Galilean type, and that all his claims to knowledge are based on his spiritual

acquaintance with the Saviour. The most that can be said for any physical vision he had of Him in earlier days is that it would rather strengthen his position as a link between the Christians who knew Christ after the flesh and those who know Him after the Spirit. Whatever his knowledge of Jesus after the flesh was, he clearly thought it inferior to his knowledge after the Spirit, as he says, 'Even if we knew Christ after the flesh, henceforth we will know Him so no more.'¹ While one does not want to talk in terms of inferiority and superiority of the apostles' knowledge, it is quite clear that Paul considered himself not a whit inferior to the Pillar Apostles; that he claimed he had the mind of Christ, and that he showed, especially in his missionary work for the Gentiles and his controversies on their behalf, that he understood Jesus better than the disciples, who knew Him after the flesh. This view is confirmed by the Fourth Evangelist, in whose pages Jesus is definitely made to speak of the things they know not now but shall know hereafter, and to promise that the Spirit of truth shall guide them into all truth. It is possible that the very acquaintance that the early apostles had with Jesus in the flesh hampered them in their realization of what Jesus risen and present with them in Spirit really meant. They would have chained down the universal Christ in a Galilean prison for ever.

The Epistles of Paul have been truly called a 'fifth Gospel,' and so they are. Paul's career was a second life of Christ, lived in a human spirit as truly as it was once lived beside the shores of the lake of Galilee. Paul's letters portray the Christ whom he experienced. It is not so much that he sets out to record his experience in the way an old-fashioned Methodist did, though he does that sometimes, but his experience vitalizes his words and deeds, and makes all things new.

Paul's knowledge of Christ is a knowledge for all men, whether they have seen Christ with the eyes of the flesh or

¹ See Note, p. 22.

not. Paul assumes, in his writings to Christians, that they have a common experience with him of the Lord, and Peter writes, perhaps not without surprise, to people who had never seen Jesus, 'whom, not having seen, ye love.' The Christ not seen was loved even to martyrdom by these Christian converts, but Peter, who had seen Him, had denied Him with oaths and forsaken Him in the hour of His need. There was some knowledge of Christ deep and powerful amongst the Christians who had not seen Him which made them love Him, a knowledge which has lasted through the centuries and still begets a love which constrains men to every sort of sacrifice ; but it is Paul's sort of knowledge—direct knowledge of one who is 'blessed because he has not seen and yet has believed.'

There is no other possible direct knowledge of Christ than this to-day. All other knowledge is knowledge about Him, not acquaintance with Him. It is intellectual, not personal ; external, not interior ; not in the truest sense spiritual. It comes from accepting His teaching, not by entering into His life ; but Christianity has always taught that Christ is to be known, not merely known about ; that He is our life. Apart from Paul and his witness, we have no knowledge of how this could have been. The witness of this man of intellect and force seems to have been a necessary link in the continuity and spread of Christianity. It made men see that Jesus the Galilean was the Messiah—the Christ of the universe. For we must not forget that most of Paul's letters are our earliest Christian documents. It may or may not be held that our present Gospels incorporate written documents of as early a date, but that, perhaps, can never be more than a conclusion of high probability. The earliest Christian writings, as they stand to-day, are indubitably from the pen of Paul.

That our earliest authentic literary knowledge of Christ should be through the letters of a man who knew Him only after the Spirit, and whose writings and teachings were sanctioned by the intimate contemporaries and acquaintances

of the Galilean, is a fact the significance of which is hardly realized even to-day.¹ Paul's knowledge of Christ must have been a knowledge which others shared, or it would have been repudiated by the men who were the apostles of Jesus and had human acquaintance with Him. However much they questioned some of Paul's innovations, they did not question the bona fides of the witness of this man who had hazarded his life for the sake of Jesus Christ, his and their Lord.

¹ See page 108 ff.

IV BACK TO JESUS

I. BACK TO JESUS MEANING AWAY FROM CHRIST

'BACK to Jesus' has been, and still is, a favourite modern war-cry. In practice it often means, 'Away from Christ' and not 'away from Paul,' as men suggest who use it. There never was a man who more emphatically said 'Back to Jesus' than Paul. He was all for Jesus—'Christ is all and in all.'¹ Paul was no Paulinist, but a Christian. He had little mercy on the people at Corinth who made his name a party sign. But he would not tolerate the use of the name Jesus—holy as was that name, to which every knee should bow—as a party sign either. He was not a Jesuanist, but a Christian, and the only Jesus he preached was Jesus Christ—the one foundation than which there is no other. It is important to distinguish Jesuanity from Christianity.

And yet what is more plausible than this cry of 'Back to Jesus'? Surely, men say, the Gospel stories give us a better idea of the Saviour of the world than a group of letters so distant in feeling from the idylls of the Galilean lake! If we are anxious to know Jesus, it is argued, let us follow the directest way to knowledge—the way of the Synoptic Gospels. But if immediate experience of Christ can be a direct experience of the soul, does not a fallacy underlie all this? Is not the study of the Gospels, however enriching they may be, the *indirect* way to Jesus? Is not Paul's way the only possible *direct* way—if Jesus really lives and is really accessible to human souls to-day?

The Gospels, in their present form at all events, were

¹ 1 Col. iii. 11.

probably not published so much to create faith as to enrich the faith which Jesus had already created in the souls of men. They gave richer historical knowledge to men about the Christ who had died and was alive again, with whom they had come into actual contact. Paul presents a Jesus unlimited by the flesh of his humiliation, eternally accessible to mankind, and speaks of his own experience, and of an experience, common with that of his readers, of that unseen but living Lord, and shows a way of approach to Him direct and immediate, for which the synoptic record, however valuable, was even actually unnecessary. The faith of the Philippian jailer was demanded before instruction was given to him. The preaching of Paul, which created world-wide Christianity as far as we have evidence, was of one who had been crucified and had risen again, in whom man could immediately gain life. It need not be doubted that much was done to enrich their faith by telling them the Gospel stories. It may well be that Mark and Luke, accompanying Paul, were specially commissioned to do so, and added to their stock every anecdote about Jesus which they could confirm, and every saying of Jesus which men had treasured in their hearts, and did not fail to possess all written accounts of Him they could find, whilst they wrote down their own (the Greek word *hyperetes*¹ applied to Mark² possibly means minister of the written word³), but the Acts of the Apostles, and even the Epistles of Paul, show that the essence of the apostolic teaching and appeal to men to be saved was not a narrative of the Galilean ministry, but a proclamation of Christ crucified and risen, of a gospel which was the power of God to salvation.

Paul's message was the direct appeal of a missionary to men to repent and be saved. Salvation did not depend on knowledge, however greatly it might be enriched by knowledge. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt

¹ See Still, *St. Paul on Trial*, p. 102.

² Acts xiii. 5.

³ See Luke i. 2, 20 ; Acts iii. 5.

be saved ' could be said to an ignorant person, who proved its truth by experiment. Many years before the Gospels appeared, the Epistles of Paul unquestionably imply the existence of living Christian communities whose faith was heroic even if their information was narrow. Many scholars, with all the excellences of their academic knowledge, who have written on St. Paul would have understood him better if they had possessed the experience of a missionary, for they would have discovered that his converts, like modern converts, were often very ignorant persons, and that their ignorance did not prevent immediate saving knowledge of Jesus, or direct relation to Christ. To imagine that the Synoptic Gospels show a more direct way to Jesus than the acts of immediate faith to which the epistles witness, is to confuse facts, and really to ignore the claim of an accessible Christ who lives and comes into contact with men. 'Back to Jesus' in practice, often means 'Away from Christ.'

2. BACK TO JESUS MEANING AWAY FROM PAULINISM

The 'Back to Jesus' movement was a reaction, and in some quarters not without justification. When it is regarded as a reaction against Paul it is based on a misunderstanding, but it was a perfectly healthy and natural reaction against a certain sort of Paulinism. When the teachings of Paul have been formulated into a catalogue of notions, and taught merely as abstract doctrines, Paul has always been misrepresented. A Paulinism unvitalized by the Christ experience is harsh and even repulsive to most people and misrepresents both Paul and his Master. In the eighteenth century, for instance, the teaching of Paul flamed into life through the witness of the Evangelical Revival, because men everywhere were enjoying the immediate experience of God in Christ which Paul taught, but when, later, Paul's teaching lost its flames, and was presented as the dead ashes

of a spent furnace, many people naturally felt the best place for it was the dustbin. The strange discussions about the controversies of the persons of the Trinity amongst themselves, and a mechanical doctrine rigidly expressed as if it were an algebraical solution, called the Scheme of Salvation, became unreal, and men felt Jesus was buried under formulas and hidden by lifeless theology. The flaming words of Paul were so manipulated as to create a soul-repelling logomachy.

Jesus became a lay figure, or a sort of legal fiction, like the John Roe and Richard Doe of the lawyers. People said, Let us go to Galilee. Calvary as taught by Paul—they meant, of course, the expositors of Paul—is meaningless, and, so far as we can see, immoral. But there must be something in Jesus—let us go to Galilee. And they went there to find fresh air.

This sort of reaction has happened not a few times in the history of the Church. Sometimes it has been against ceremony, sometimes against formula. Jesus suddenly seems to a generation to be dead, and it wants Him to rise again. In one age His inner meaning is reduced to credal formulas, and words about His co-substantiality with the Father and the like, leave men hungering for something human. Not a few times He has been so apotheosized as to lose His humanity; He becomes remote from mankind, and always men's hearts cry out for something human in God. When Jesus became a credal formula, they cried out to Mary, His human mother, and when Mary was regarded as a goddess rather than as a woman they cried out to Anna, her mother, or Joseph, her husband; for the heart of man cannot rest satisfied with a God without a heart—and the God of the evangelical formulas seemed very distant to many Christians in the nineteenth century. That does not mean any more than in other centuries, that there were not multitudes who found their way, in spite of formulas and ritualisms, and even in many cases by means of them, to vital

touch with God. But many were repelled. 'Back to Jesus,' they cried—back to the human, actual Jesus, and away from Paul and the schemes and technical terms with which theologians discredited him. It cannot be wondered that men who half thought that salvation depended on the acceptance of remote and unintelligible doctrinal confessions should have sought Galilee again. Nor can it be denied that the modern return to the Gospels has done much to enrich the faith and humanize the theology of many Protestants. But was not that probably what the Gospels did when they were first circulated amongst the early Churches? Did not they enrich and inform the faith of those who had experienced the unseen Christ and wanted to know more exactly about His earthly ministry? Did not these men acquire information about Jesus not discernible by spiritual experience, which enriched the very experience of Christ which no mere information about Jesus could have created?

No greater lover of Jesus ever breathed than the Apostle Paul, and, however much Jesus was Messiah to Paul, it was Messiah who was Jesus; and he stressed nothing so much as that gospel of which he was not ashamed—that the heavenly Messiah was a crucified Galilean artisan. What made Paul so unpopular in fashionable circles was that he proclaimed a Messiah human, humble, and obedient unto death—and a shameful death; Messiah crucified. The heart of his teaching was the Galilean who, though disgraced by crucifixion, had risen again and was the one hope of humanity.

3. HOW PAUL GOES BACK TO JESUS

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the value to Christianity of Paul's identification of the Christ of his experience with the Jesus of history. In our own days, attempts have been made to emphasize the difference between the Christ idea and the man Jesus of Nazareth. If it could be shown that the two

were divergent—an idea and a man are, of course, really impossible to equate—the result would be disastrous to Evangelical Christianity, and would reduce Catholic practice and devotion to an absurdity. No such thing ever entered the mind of Paul, and in nothing is his witness of more value than in his identification of the Christ with whom he was spiritually united with the Galilean peasant who went about doing good, and who suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, dead, and buried. Christianity became the religion of men's souls, because Paul went back to Jesus. Paul's Christ was not an idea which he personified, tacking on to the personification the name Jesus. Paul's Christ was a person whom he recognized, and who said to him one day, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,' and another, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Paul may or may not have been a victim of hallucinations, but, so far as he was conscious of the facts of his own experience, it was the Jesus who had been crucified a year or two earlier with whom he had spiritual dealings, and that Jesus whom the early disciples claimed as Messiah was evidently, to Paul, Messiah. The Christ Paul knew was neither the Christ 'idea' nor the Messiah of Jewish Apocalyptic; He was Jesus; His characteristics as Paul expounded them were the characteristics of Jesus, as may be seen by the expression Paul gives in his ethical teaching of what he learnt from the Lord. Paul's conduct was not stamped by Jewish Messianic ideas, but by the ideas of Jesus of Nazareth. His ethic is identical with the Lord's. It is the exalted Jesus whom he proclaims as Messiah, and proclaims Him as such in contradistinction to the heavenly man of Jewish Apocalyptic. The Jews were looking for a man from heaven of an entirely different type; but Paul's man from heaven, as they were shocked to hear, had lived the life of a peasant, and had been slain like a criminal by an execution which to them was disgraceful, loathly, execrable; and the characteristics and features of that man were the characteristics and features of the Messiah

whom Paul declared. The essence of his teaching was that the Messiah was this crucified Jesus. 'We preach Messiah crucified' as Lord—no other Messiah but this man your contemporary, and the companion of people whom you knew.

This does not mean that he was not Messiah and the heavenly man and all that had value in Jewish Old Testament and Apocalyptic conceptions of the Messiah. 'He may be all that,' Paul would say, 'but I know Him by personal acquaintance to be Jesus of Nazareth. I have seen God's glory in His face.' Paul knew as well as any man that this was no easy belief for the unilluminated intellect, and for this reason said that 'No man can call Jesus Lord save by the Spirit.' Jesus the Messiah! That does not mean, as Peabody, echoing many Germans, says: 'Paul is speaking, not of the teacher of the Sermon on the Mount, but of the eternal Christ'; it does mean that he speaks of both identified in one. Paul did not need to go back to Jesus, for he never forsook Him. While it is true that other men of his days held his view, and held it before he did, his value to us is that he, a man whose knowledge of Christ was exclusively after the Spirit, identified the Christ whom he knew with the Jesus of history, whose face many men of his day had actually seen; just as they in their turn had identified the Jesus of history with the Messiah who was to come.

The advantages of this identification are not only immeasurably great as the foundation of the Christian faith, but also, because, when either side of Jesus Christ—Jesus or Christ—is emphasized to the exclusion of the other, truth is endangered. It is endangered to-day by the men who say 'Back to Jesus' and mean away from Christ, or at any time by such mystics as say 'Back to Christ' and mean away from Jesus. In Paul's day the danger from the latter was perhaps greater than from the former class, and it was necessary for the greatest of Christian mystics to write, 'That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our

hands handled, concerning the Word of Life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us), that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.'¹

The vagueness of mysticism is avoided by Paul's identification of the Christ of his experience with the Jesus of history, and all attempts to break down such an identification endanger Christianity.

4. BACK TO JESUS AND MODERNISM

But it is primarily the spirit of our age which underlies the 'Back to Jesus' cry. The supernatural explanation of things which satisfied former centuries is challenged by an age which has entered into a deeper understanding of Nature, and the effort to explain naturally events which through ignorance were once beyond natural explanation is not only legitimate but even desirable. But history and psychology can hardly be claimed as empirical in the sense in which the natural sciences are. Where experiment and verification cannot, in the nature of the case, be first hand, the assumption that scientific history and psychology have the same claim to credence as empirical sciences is ill-founded. The attempt to give a scientific historical account of Christianity—of its spiritual phenomena and historical facts—has been, no doubt, one of the great intellectual adventures of our age, and an effort by no means fruitless; but, as Dr. Deissmann confesses, 'the complete task involved cannot be completely performed by historical means.'² Unfortunately, the scientific historian of Christianity has failed to see that no account of Christianity which ignores experiment is really scientific. He has often used the knife remorselessly. Anything in the Christian documents difficult to explain without recourse to supernaturalism has been ruthlessly cut away, and human

¹ 1 John i. 1-3.

² Deissmann, *Paul*.

Christs have been painted neither conceived by the Holy Ghost nor born of the Virgin Mary, but created by the romantic brain of a Renan or the humanist scholarship of German professors. It is sufficient to say of them that these creations rarely satisfy for any length of time, but are rapidly succeeded by other creations themselves, as Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* shows, not more permanently satisfactory. The human Jesus of the liberal Christianity of the nineteenth century, for instance, has become an incredible figure to men who seek Him in the Gospels, but the weird apocalyptic figure of Schweitzer is just as incredible, though quite as fairly deduced from the Gospels as the earlier Jesus which it superseded. Both fictions are the result of the over-emphasis of particular parts of the Gospels without due consideration of the others. The truth is that the historical Jesus who attracts the eyes of men eludes their grasp, and those very elements in the Jesus of the Synoptists which elude men would satisfy them in the Christ of experience if they would only follow Paul's direct experimental way of seeking Him.

The 'Jesus of history' may mean, what Paul would himself have meant, but the scientific historian usually means much less. He claims that, if Jesus is treated as an historical character, He must be treated as other historical characters, and history knows nothing of resurrections. Hence the career of Jesus ends for him on Calvary: Anything that comes after that is the influence of a dead man and no more. The supernatural elements must be eliminated or ignored by history. The historian either rejects them as superstition, or ignores them as material which is outside his science. This, of course, begs the question in the case of Jesus, and His supernatural claims are disregarded as normal historical material, so that the historical view of Jesus is not based on evidence to be drawn from the facts, but on a metaphysical prejudice which eliminates the phenomena which we call supernatural. In practice, the 'Jesus of

history ' becomes at best a great saint and hero whose teachings are nevertheless often admitted to be of permanent value to mankind. Devout people of our day are more influenced by this teaching than they know, although it is a method which really evades much that is relevant to a complete view of Jesus.

Scientific historians are not all of one class. A great Christian teacher, for instance, like Harnack claims to write from the standpoint of history only, and in speaking of the gospel always means exclusively the *teaching* of Jesus ; but, then, he by no means excludes the supernatural, as is so often done by historians. He thinks the value of Christology has been exaggerated, it is true ; but in the sense of its use in the creeds, which is the use and abuse he stresses, few evangelicals to-day would altogether disagree with him ; but he preaches all that makes the real value of Christology, namely, the experience of the living Christ, the reality of the resurrection in the lives of men and the persistent and abiding Lordship of Jesus.

No one can read his vivid and pointed account of the religion of Paul and the Early Church without feeling that he understands that Christianity is life and experience of God, and not merely a series of teachings to be accepted. But the Jesus of many of his co-patriots obviously lacks ' the power of God to salvation.' He is merely an historical figure of a remote century, and without living relationships to our own time. Whatever is true of the teachings of Jesus—and who can exaggerate their value?—the actual Christian religion which has saved men was the religion of a Redeemer.

The Jesus of the modern academy, even when sympathetically portrayed, is often a pathetic figure—wise and heroic no doubt, but somewhat patronized because He had not the advantage of a university education. Generous allowances are made for His unavoidable limitations, but He is not regarded as a real Saviour of men ; He is just the creature of nineteenth-century research, this man who literally turned

the world upside down. The human, Continental Jesus of the nineteenth-century is a character of fiction, not of history, because the 'historians' do not face up to the features of His mission which make Him unique. They forget that characteristics are not necessarily unhistoric, because in some respects they are without historical parallels.

Two English literary men, although owing, in one case at least, much to German writers, have, in my opinion, expressed more lucidly what the pure humanist can find, from his point of view, in Jesus, than any of their Continental contemporaries—Mr. Middleton Murry and Mr. Bernard Shaw. Both of them share the conviction of our age that supernatural explanations of Jesus as divine must be disregarded as belonging to an order of thought now for educated men superseded. I do not mean that Mr. Middleton Murry shows any great originality. In point of fact, his conception of Christ's life is substantially an English version of a popular German theory, but he sets it out more religiously, and makes it more attractive by means of a beautiful style and a reverent spirit. He writes of Jesus from the point of view that He was a man of genius. He does not examine the conclusion of the Church about Him—that He was God. Such a description of Jesus he says that he does not understand, and in consequence rejects. He does not, as the result of an examination of the material, come to his conclusion that Jesus is not God, but eliminates as antiquated this explanation, without inquiry into its meaning, and assumes His humanity, and, as humanity is always sinful, His need like other men of pardon and renewal. It seems a pity that this should have been so, because Mr. Murry's judgement is coloured, and a book of great beauty and tenderness, in many ways extraordinarily illuminating, reaches conclusions which cannot be called satisfactory. Why should he not first, without having made up his mind, have examined his material, and then asked, Who is this Son of Man? As one who greatly admires his book, and has

in many ways profited by reading it, I feel the conclusion that Mr. Murry is compelled to come to, notwithstanding his preliminary rejection of our Lord's divinity, justifies one in thinking that, if he had left the question open, he would have been in substantial agreement with the traditional opinion of the Church of Christ. But actually he finds in our Lord's baptism a proof that He was a man penitent for His misdoing, who discovered that God was His Father, and who taught men that they might share His experience and was disappointed that they failed to do so.

And yet, as even Harnack points out, there is not a sign in His life of any penitence or of 'a strong crisis or breach with the past.' But Jesus, according to Mr. Murry, was no ordinary man, as the critics foolishly aver, 'but a man of genius' (though he admits He is more than a man of genius). So Jesus thought the thoughts of His day, but in a way ordinary people did not think them. He shared the view that a Messiah, the Son of Man, was coming; the real crisis in His life, however, was the conviction which came to Him at Caesarea Philippi that He Himself was to be the Messiah who would come, and not merely His herald. And for this reason He decided to go to the cross. His crucifixion was predetermined by Himself. He did not expect to die; He believed that, on the cross, God would deliver Him, and that He would return in clouds of glory—the Messiah, the Son of Man. He gambled everything on His tremendous faith, and was disappointed, forsaken of God, as He said on the cross. But was He wrong? Was it only the form, not the reality, that was wrong? He did win by dying. (Mr. Murry is a little ambiguous here.) And He does in some true sense live.

The theory, when one remembers the definite delimitation of the divine, works out as well as any theory of the sort is likely to do, but it is not satisfactory. After all, it is difficult to believe that Jesus was a hallucinated visionary who died for His hallucination, and, if it was not really a hallucination,

but just a literalizing of the time-bound metaphor of a truth, then it is not less difficult to apply the description 'man,' or even 'man of genius,' to Jesus. He was a man of genius and something more. What was that something more? Mr. Murry does not tell us. The Church of Christ does.

Mr. Bernard Shaw¹ is less subtle than Mr. Murry. He, too, regards Jesus as a man of genius, and in those fields of human thought where Shaw himself is a guide says Jesus was supreme. Jesus was, and is, the greatest of authorities on social economics, according to Mr. Shaw, and His words command all time. Unfortunately, says Mr. Shaw, like other geniuses, e.g. Nietzsche and Ruskin, Jesus went mad, and suffered from the common illusion of the insane that He was a God who must die and rise again. Is not this only a rather brutal way of saying that which Mr. Murry says with more words and greater delicacy?

It would require volumes, not a few paragraphs, to give adequate treatment to the vast amount of modern work done on the 'Jesus of history,' but it would be generally agreed by all parties that there are elements in the gospel narratives as they stand, of a supernatural or apocalyptic character which baffle any fair-minded humanist writer who deals with them. Some writers explain them as reflections of later thought which crept into books written towards the end of the first century. Some have regarded apocalyptic material as the only primitive material, and have fabricated from it a fanatical prophet whom they have named Jesus. Others have almost disregarded or laid aside these difficult passages, and, vainly striving to eliminate all that is supernatural in the stories from their purview, simply pictured a sublime teacher. But, when squarely faced, some synthesis must be found between the man who preached the Sermon on the Mount and the man who prophesied His coming as Messiah with the clouds of heaven.

No just and effective criticism can excise, as many

¹ *Androcles and the Lion*: Introduction.

Germans have done, supernatural and ecclesiastical passages as reflecting the opinion of the second generation of Christians *circa* A.D. 80, when they think the Gospels came to their present form—and for this reason, if for none other, that the Jesus of Paul *circa* A.D. 50 is as truly divine ; Paul's letters often imply customs, beliefs, and developments of a character more advanced than anything in the Synoptic Gospels. What of the significance of passages in the Epistle to the Galatians, possibly written in the forties, such as, ' It pleased God to reveal His Son in me ' ; ' I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ' ; ' God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby I was crucified unto the world and the world unto me ' ?

Any fair humanist examination of the facts leads to the conclusion that the Gospels do contain a supernatural element. Mr. Middleton Murry, who, going further than the most trenchant critics would approve, treats Mark's Gospel alone as of first rate authority, is faced with the supernatural side of Jesus which must be explained, and can only be explained by him as madness or hallucination, however beautifully the hallucination is veiled by reverent feeling or well-chosen words. But if the Saviourhood of Jesus—the greatest influence the modern world has known—is ultimately the hallucination of a mentally overstrained man of genius, there is no reading of history which can do other than drive man to despair. The argument that Christianity is founded on a series of delusions really means a *reductio ad absurdum* of purely humanistic theories of Jesus ; there must have been something more—much more—than that in Him to account for what has happened in the world. The theory of the divinity of our Lord is really easier to accept than the theories of the men who deal with any fairness with the records, but reject as impossible the belief that Jesus was the Son of God.

But what is important to assert is that it is just these elusive

elements in the character of Jesus which made men who met Him say, 'Who is He?' And the fact acclaimed by His contemporaries that He rose again from the dead and appeared to them; that Paul, like many others, lived in union with Him when He had risen from the dead; that direct access to Him is open to all men; that centuries of Christian experience reaffirm these claims should cause men of the modern mentality to question as to whether they are correct in assuming that Jesus can be satisfactorily classified as a human being—even if a religious genius—and nothing else. Are not mere human categories too narrow for Jesus?

5. NATURALISTIC THEORIES OF JESUS AND PAUL

The scientific historian who somehow gets rid of the supernatural elements in the story of Jesus quickly disposes of the evidence of Paul about Jesus, because he regards Paul's experience of Jesus as the hallucination of a visionary, and visions cannot be regarded as history. Nothing irritates him more than the influence of Paul in the actual development of Christianity. His usual method in dealing with those who assert Paul's claim to consideration is to say, 'You make Paul the real founder of Christianity, which is absurd'; or, if he writes to discredit Christianity to assert with Nietzsche that Paul was its founder. 'Who except a few scholars,' says Nietzsche, 'know the story of one of the most ambitious and importunate of souls, a superstitious and crafty mind—the story of the Apostle Paul? But for this remarkable story, the aberrations and storms of such a mind, such a soul, there would be no Christianity; we should hardly have heard of a small Jewish sect whose teacher died on the cross.' This irritation with the fact of Paul and his influence assumes a savage complexion sometimes, as when Lagarde says (I quote from Weinel) that 'I do not in the least doubt that so fanatical a brain [as Paul's] was transformed by a hallucination. In Acts i. it is assumed as self-evident that one who

desired to be an apostle must have lived with Jesus as a witness of his life. Paul never saw Jesus, not to speak of being His companion. His relations to Jesus were : firstly, that of hate towards the disciples ; and secondly, that of a vision ; than which no more untrustworthy sources of knowledge could be named. It is the logic of theologians to affirm that, although Israel did not recognize its Messiah in Jesus, he was none the less the Messiah of Israel ; and that, although the inner group which had received the gospel hated Paul as a corrupter of the truth, he was none the less the representative of the gospel. A Church may justify such logic, but one who has any scientific training must decline to follow the logic, or those who respect it.' We will not conclude that this is the best that scientific training can produce ! Such dogmatism would make any theologian shudder. How did Lagarde know Paul never saw Jesus ? Did Lagarde never hear of prophets, statesmen, authors, and Messiahs who were misunderstood in their age, not only by their contemporaries, but even by their disciples ? And what reason is there for alleging Paul's hatred of the disciples, or even that they regarded him as a corrupter of the truth, except that such things have so often been said in Germany that some people have come to believe them ? A falsehood, if it is only repeated frequently enough, unfortunately wins too often the assent of credulous and prejudiced people.

The real explanation of such fierce polemic seems to be the inability of clever men to explain the humanly inexplicable history of the Christian religion. It is time that humanistic writers about Christianity saw that, however much history and psychology alike consider it in their respective contexts, the context in which it must be primarily considered is that of the religious experience of Christians. None but experients can be empirically scientific in dealing with its phenomena.

Some German writers of the Liberal Christian school have developed the naturalistic theory of Jesus and Paul with

devoutness and beauty. W. Wrede wrote a widely influential book a few years ago in which he claimed that Paul, of whom he writes with great admiration, was the founder of a new religion different from, and inferior to, that of Jesus, but the religion which we are bound to claim has ever since been known as Christianity. 'Paul,' he says, 'made Christianity a religion of redemption.' Paul is to be regarded as the second founder of Christianity. 'The gospel' as Wrede thinks of it was the message Jesus gave to the world. Paul's gospel, on the other hand, was of a Christ to be worshipped, whose death and resurrection brought redemption, and was something Jesus never thought of. Paul did not worship Jesus, but Christ, the heavenly man, the Messiah, whom it is true he identified with Jesus of Nazareth, but he knew little about Jesus and it was always this apocalyptic—indeed, according to Wrede, mythological—figure whom Paul proclaimed. But the influence on Paul's mind of the apocalyptic Christ except so far as certain eschatological ideas coloured his teaching to the Thessalonians, apparently was not permanent. The hope of our Lord's second coming is found in later letters, but Paul seems to have dropped the apocalyptic imagery by which he expounded it in his earlier ministry.

Wrede's contention that the pre-existence of Christ is part of this apocalyptic conception, which he calls mythological, can hardly be sustained if he means it was simply due to apocalyptic. In point of fact, some apocalypses make little reference to the Messiah. What evidently influenced Paul's mind was the Old Testament, and not apocalyptic. His numerous quotations fully substantiate that statement. He undoubtedly saw in Jesus Israel's hope, as well as the Light that lightened the Gentiles; but the features and characteristics of the Christ he knew were the features and characteristics of Jesus of Nazareth. Wrede was answered by men of his own school—J. Weiss in particular, who had little difficulty in showing up his exaggerations. Weiss

argued that the influence of the teachings of Jesus on Paul was immense, and that the love Paul gave to Christ would be incredible if it were not the man Jesus of whom he was thinking; but he quite agrees with Wrede that Jesus expected no adoration or worship, and treats Jesus and Paul as two good men of different temperaments—but just as good men. These scholars think of Jesus as a great teacher, particularly, perhaps, of the Fatherhood of God; but that He should be a redeemer in the sense in which Christians have regarded Him they seem to regard as incredible. Bousset further discredits the religion of redemption as being due to the influence of the mystery religions, and thinks the name Lord was applied to Jesus just as those religions applied it to their mythical deities. This also is called scientific history.

It would lead us too far afield to contravene these notions at any length. They are obviously necessitated by the theory that Jesus can be regarded as an ordinary historical person. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that the efforts to extract from the Gospels the 'Liberal Christ' can only be accomplished by mutilating them, as we have said above, on the assumption that everything supernatural in the picture reflects later Christian opinion, which really begs the question, and even then it is difficult to explain the apocalyptic passages so emphasized by Schweitzer, which are, on any pure historical or critical grounds, impossible to remove.

What concerns us is the question raised by Wrede whether or no it is true to regard the Jesus Christ of Paul as the Christ of the apocalyptic teaching of Paul's contemporaries or Jesus of Nazareth. The answer of Weiss is sufficient on any careful reading of what Paul says. No impartial person can study Paul's passionate love for Christ, or teachings so obviously expressive of the known mind of Christ, without seeing that it was the Jesus of the Gospels of whom Paul was thinking.

The truth is that Jesus of Nazareth, known to His contemporaries, if not to Paul, had to be explained by them, and the explanation which the Church adopted—that He was God's Son—is the only explanation which in the long run can be adopted about the man who died and rose again, and who was so known in the actual experience of St. Paul as to be all in all to him. If this is not scientific history, it means that Christianity, as Deissmann says, can only be partially treated as historical. And what is outside the scope of history happens to be the vital core of Christianity. When Harnack deals with Jesus's consciousness of Sonship, he says significantly: 'No one could fathom this mystery who had not had a parallel experience.' It is simply amazing that men who stress the importance of scientific history should fail to see the unscientific character of their non-empirical dogmas.

Perhaps it may be added that a book like the Epistle to the Hebrews is not sufficiently considered by people who think the Christ of Paul's experience is merely the shadow Christ of apocalyptic. Paul did not write that letter, but it is generally thought to be Pauline in spirit, and it is quite clear that the Christ it declares is Jesus of Nazareth—the whole significance of the Forerunner and Ascended Lord is drawn from the story of a human life of suffering and final victory.

It should also be remembered that, though Paul is likely to have been influenced by the thought of his time—such as apocalyptic, and, even if unconsciously, by pagan religion—there is very little in his teaching which cannot be accounted for by the Old Testament, which obviously influenced him more than any other thing except his experience of Jesus. Why seek for explanations in the obscure rather than the obvious? Paul's Christ does not resemble the Christ of apocalyptic; His features are those of Jesus; and 1 Cor. xi. shows that the Christ with whom he identified Jesus was the Christ forthshadowed in Old Testament rather than first century apocalyptic.

6. A MODERN SCHISM

The vital matter for modern Evangelical Christians is the schism which the Paul or Jesus schools are making in Christianity. The division which matters amongst Christians is much less the differences between Romans and Protestants than between the men who regard Christianity as a religion of redemption and those who think it a religion of instruction. Men do no honour to Jesus who teach that the gospel is His teaching and there is no other. They falsify the saying of Paul that other foundation can no man lay save Jesus Christ. After all, where is there a record of Christians after the death of Christ who believed that the gospel was just the teaching of Jesus? What evidence is there for such a group until modern times? Paul is the first writer we can quote, it is true, but behind Paul there are the men from whom he received his gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ. The acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Christ, and the endowment with the Spirit, were characteristics of the Church from the day of its birth at Pentecost. Christianity found its dynamic in the presence and power of the invisible Christ from the very first, and does any one think it could have endured apart from its mystical experience?

To assert or imply that history can only deal with men as men, and hence it can only deal with Jesus as a man, and His Church as a human society, simply means that history, if it be so defined, cannot deal with early Christianity, but one may hope that scientific historians may find a wider definition, which will include the unique as well the usual events of the past.

7. IS JESUS BEST APPROACHED BY HISTORICAL IMAGINATION
OR BY PAULINE FAITH?

The danger of the 'Back to Jesus' movement is that it necessarily appeals to imagination rather than to faith. It

visualizes an historical character of another century instead of approaching by faith the supreme figure of all the centuries, who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' The man who visualizes the first-century man of Galilee as teacher and hero no doubt enriches his imagination with a picture of moving beauty and force, and the man who most clearly understands the sayings of the Great Teacher is quickened with words that are spirit and life; but if Jesus can really be reached by direct access, as Christians claim, is not His companionship and Saviourhood even more valuable, and will not direct knowledge most help one to understand what He said and did in Galilee?

To many Christian men this distinction between imagination and faith has little significance. Faith and imagination are almost inextricably mingled in their thought about Christ, and to know more about Him, to visualize Him more clearly, is merely to enrich their conception of one whom they already know. 'Back to Jesus' is a good motto for the people who go back by way of Christ, but, when it means away from Christ, it means the choice of indirect rather than direct approach to Him.

'Back to Jesus' often comes to mean back to the Galilean teacher. It means back to Galilee and away from Calvary, and even back to the days before Calvary was thought of as the final defeat of Jesus; back to the times when no difficult problems of the resurrection obtruded themselves to baffle the modern world; back to conditions that do not, and cannot, exist to-day, and can only be reconstructed by an act of imagination by such as cut themselves off from what Christianity has meant historically. 'Back to Jesus' often means back to the day before Christianity really began to be, when it was in the making—back to conditions that must in the nature of the case be unreal for those who can never experience them, but can only learn about them from books. Christianity as an historical religion had its sources in the risen Christ, or, at all events, in the experience which was professed

of a Christ who had risen. There is not the least evidence that Christianity could have persisted without that belief and preaching, and from the very earliest times a definite chasm existed between the Jesus of Galilee and the Christ whom Paul and the apostles preached. This may be regretted, as it always is by men who have not shared the experience of the Unseen Christ, but the fact set down by Oswald Spengler, for instance, is undeniable: 'Christ's teachings as they had flowed from His mild and noble nature fell into the background, and their place was taken by the teaching of Him. As the Ariser He became for the disciples a new figure, in and of the apocalyptic, and (what was more) its most important and final figure.'

This, with some qualifications of the word apocalyptic, is true. And it is not only an account of the disciples' belief, but of their necessary belief. Paul's writings are an indubitable witness that Jesus took the place of His own teachings, and necessarily took the place in the hearts of men. In that place He must remain; but He can only remain there if our access to Him remains direct. Back to Jesus, His work being unfinished, is back to Jesus Christ incomplete and not perfected. To limit ourselves to His teaching in Galilee is a deliberate refusal to accept what Jesus really means to mankind. He died and rose again for our redemption, and has continued to work throughout the centuries in the Church and in the hearts of the redeemed.

V

PAUL'S WAY OF DIRECT ACCESS

It may be asked whether after all Jesus is not the chief experient of the Christian religion, and, if so, why should not His experience, rather than that of one of His followers, be the subject of our examination? The reason is obvious: Jesus was not a Christian. The experience we are examining is not His experience of religion, but men's experience of Him, and of God in Him. Jesus was not the first Christian, the model Christian, but Christ.

If we were discussing experients of religion generally, Jesus obviously would take the first place; indeed, He would be found so to outsoar all others that He would ultimately take the only place. Jesus was the supreme experient of God, but He is God. The records the Gospels give of Him picture one who, from the first fugitive hint of Him as a boy in the Temple till the time of His resurrection, was fully God-conscious—one with God. We have no evidence of growth in the thought of Jesus, no account of the development of His thought. As in the case of any person living in time, He experienced successive events which had to be handled as they came, but the attempts to prove from actual evidence the development of His mind are quite unconvincing. His first words were as final as His last. Jesus was not a thinker; He knew. He did not struggle to formulate His ideas or fight His way to truth. He knew intuitively what the truth was, and expressed it spontaneously, with a finality for which there is no parallel. It may, of course, be argued that there was development in His early unrecorded years; it is obvious that there was the

normal development of a baby to boy,¹ and boy to man, but the Gospels give no account of it, and all writing about it is purely speculative—just as really speculative from twentieth-century men who express themselves in the language of modern psychology as in the legends of the Protevangelium of early Christianity. We have no data but the actual words of the Gospels, and in them the sayings of Jesus are intuitions, and they have the authority, not of scribes and students, but of the other world.

Jesus as a rule does not argue ; He affirms ; and His authority is always that of a first-hand experient of God. Such arguments as those with the scribes in Jerusalem are quite exceptional, and are obviously based on intuition rather than ratiocination. He is conscious of God's Fatherhood and of His own Sonship, and that relation, however it is explained, is fundamental to all that He says and does. He shows no consciousness that any of His disciples actually experienced a sonship like His own.

The teachings of Jesus are direct experiences of God so far as they are Godward, and direct messages from God to man so far as they are manward. They are gleams of light from the eternal city. They are never tentative words which He afterwards had to correct. Any reader of Jesus and Paul will soon see the difference. Paul, with all his intellectual force and eloquence, was always struggling to express himself, developing the truth which he expressed in cruder form at one time and more polished at another, and, as a study of the Epistles of Galatians and Romans shows, growing in knowledge, but always realizing that there are things unspeakable, experiences that pass knowledge.

Jesus gives no impression at all of a personality struggling after greater knowledge ; He speaks with absolute and final authority. God shines on the world through the face of one who is the Light of the World ; He is an experient of God, troubled, not because He cannot tell the world what God

¹ See Luke ii. 52.

means, but because men, 'having ears, hear not, and eyes, see not.'

The question remains, What more can we need than Christ's experience of God, which He wishes to share with us? But there are two points which need consideration :

There are God-experiences of Jesus which men can never share ; there are human experiences of God in Christ which Jesus can never share.

It is true that, if we come to Jesus, He will give us rest—quietude of spirit through trust in His Father, whom we can find in Him—and in a measure we can enter into oneness with His Sonship—He is the first-born of many brethren ; but we cannot share the experience of saying, 'Come unto *Me* and *I* will give *you* rest.' We cannot say, 'Come unto *Us*.' Our Lord's vocation and ours are fundamentally different. Ours can be worked out with fear and trembling in His spirit, but He had a work to do that no human being could do. No man can be a Christ. The appeal to people to be Christs, popular a few years ago, was a meaningless appeal. No Christian man can be more than a Christian. The Church is not composed of little Jesuses. There is one Christ always present in the midst of the candlesticks, and the rest of us are Christians, or trying to be. Our very friendship with Jesus depends on our obedience : 'Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Jesus is the captain ; we are His soldiers. Jesus is master, we are servants. Jesus is teacher ; we are learners, and only successful in learning as we make 'that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too.' Our place is at His feet. Jesus is Redeemer, and we are redeemed. And those God-experiences of Jesus which made Him Captain, Master, Redeemer, Lord, are His experiences and not ours.

But, correspondingly, we have experiences—experiences of Him—which He cannot share. They are our experiences of God in Christ ; they are Christian experiences, not Christ's experiences ; and they are the common experiences of

Christian men through nineteen centuries. Paul was one—perhaps the greatest—of these experients, and the first to write his experiences down. Hence the importance of his Christian experiences as data for investigation. For it matters that we examine not only, so far as we may, the Redeemer's experience, but also the experience of the redeemed. We are sinners as they were, not Saviours as He is. Jesus can save a sinful man from his sins, but He cannot share the experience of the man who cries for mercy and receives it; that at least is the peculiar joy of the redeemed, who can sing a new song to the Lamb which even the Lamb cannot sing. Jesus is experienced by Christians, but He can never enjoy the experiences of Christians. He is the object, not the subject, of Christian gratitude. When we think of Christian experience we think of Jesus as experienced, not as experient.

But even to enter into such experiences of Jesus as we may share with Him we must come to Him as to the Living Christ, not as the dead Jesus of history.

That, of course, is by the way of the great cloud of witnesses, not the way of historical research (although in its own way, that is valuable too). It is Paul's way—the experient's way. The dead and distant Jesus regarded as a mere historical person is a teacher of dogmas, and his teaching is merely a body of doctrine, however valuable; but the man who enters into our Lord's experience of His Father can only enter in, as Paul did, by a faith which unites him with a living though invisible Lord. There is no way in which a living man can share the experience of one who is dead and distant.

But why Paul? Cannot experience of Jesus be acquired apart from Paul and his letters? Is Paul necessary to salvation? The value of Paul is that he is the earliest authentic witness who has left us a written record of the fact that experience of Jesus can be as truly realized by people who have never seen Him, and who have never heard

His voice, as by those who were his companions in the days of His flesh. When we speak of Paul's way, we do not mean that no one has access to Christ except those who share Paul's theories of the atonement or beliefs in the second coming. Paul got to Christ long before he had formulated a doctrine of Christ's death, or had even thought of justification by faith. His doctrines explained his experience to his own mind; they did not create it. By 'Paul's way' we mean the way of direct access, not to Jesus of Nazareth in His Galilean days, but to Jesus Christ, who, having finished His earthly work, is risen, and so lives that the apostle can say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

But is such a way necessary? Are the epistles of any real value? Or, for that matter, is the long record of Christian experience, or the Church, the home of that experience? Are not the Gospels all-sufficient for salvation, and the other writings of the New Testament really confusing and superfluous except as interesting historical documents whereby we can reconstruct for ourselves a valuable picture of the apostolic period? The point to be emphasized is that what is necessary to the Christian life is the knowledge that Jesus is not merely an historical character of the past, but a living, accessible Lord in the present, and only experiences of His power and presence can demonstrate that. Apart from the continuous witness of the Church, it is unlikely that such a belief could exist, and, although there is obviously enough in the Gospels for salvation, our saving approach to the Gospels is through the witness of men who have realized Jesus as Saviour. The people who in our times say, 'Back to Jesus,' and have profited so greatly by their sojournings in Galilee—have profited because they have always read the Gospels, though often unconsciously, in the context of continuous Christian experience of which Paul was the first outstanding witness. They have followed Paul's way without knowing it.

The Christian people who say the teaching of Jesus is

enough are recipients of much more from Him than His teaching. A good putting of what I mean is quoted in the following extract from the Saturday religious correspondent of *The Times*: 'It is said that at his death Buddha exclaimed, "Now my doctrine takes my place." He was only the means by which a certain message was conveyed to mankind. Moses, Zoroaster, Mohammed, were never the objects of the religions they founded; they and their followers recognize that their teaching was more important than themselves. It is otherwise with Christianity. Christ's doctrine can never take His place. Knowledge about His life in Palestine, or of His present significance in human history, must be accompanied by a personal apprehension of Him as the Lord who lives with His people, by the consciousness of His presence as the guide and helper of men, giving them strength equal to their tasks.' The Gospels, of course, in the light of Christian experience are sufficient. But scientific history treating them as purely historical documents would exclude those portions of them which only experience verifies; when separated from experience their religious value is largely neutralised.

If some one without the bias either of the Christian experient or the scientific historian—some Hindoo or Japanese for instance—read the Sermon on the Mount and like teachings, and drew up a list of them in the form of doctrines, he would undoubtedly have an excellent catalogue of Christian precepts, which it is very doubtful if any human being, however much he tried, would obey. He would find a new Torah more terrible than that of Sinai—a code of laws that condemned the very thoughts of every sin-stained human heart, and created an ideal so lofty that a man might well run away in fear. But, supposing he pursued his study further and discovered that the speaker of the words said to his contemporaries, 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest,' to take one instance, what would he do? Would he come? If he regarded those words as the historical

words of a great man spoken to his own times, what would coming mean? If he obeyed them and came, he would no longer be considering the words as the utterance of the past, but as a message of the present. But in that case Jesus would no longer, in the sense of the scientific historian, be historical. How would such a gospel reader know that Jesus was *present*, saying such words *now*? Is it not obvious that he would appeal to the followers of Jesus? 'Did you come?' he would say. 'Is Jesus giving that invitation to-day? How can I know He is giving it to me?' He could only find an answer to his questions in the last resort in the experience of Christians, and the first Christian experient to leave a record of the union of the soul with the Jesus who lives was Paul. He would be driven into Paul's way.

Mrs. Humphry Ward records two reminiscences of Walter Pater which are perhaps worth quoting—one of 1873, when he shocked a dinner-party at Oxford by saying, 'No reasonable persons could govern their lives by the opinion or action of a man who died eighteen hundred years ago'; and another later, when she said to him she thought orthodoxy would sooner or later be broken down by its assailants. 'I don't think so,' he said. Then, with hesitation: 'And we don't altogether agree. You think it's all plain. But I can't. There are such mysterious things. Take that saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." How can you explain that? There is mystery in it—something supernatural.' Jesus, if He were only an historical character, dead eighteen hundred years ago, would be a vanishing quantity; but Jesus who says, 'Come unto Me,' says it because He is living—as thousands of experients declare, among whom Paul is the first witness to give a literary record.

Jesus or Paul—Paul or Jesus! What an absurd antithesis! How meaningless it is to men who think of Jesus, not merely after the flesh, but after the Spirit! How has this false antithesis arisen? It has arisen largely in

academies among men who think of religion, not as experience, but as doctrine, and have missed the point by contrasting the teaching of Paul as one body of dogmas with the teaching of Jesus as another. It has arisen because Paul's explanation of experience and his deductions from it—Paul's doctrines—have been regarded as primary in his religious witness when what was really primary was what lay behind them. It has arisen because men have dissociated Paul's doctrines from his experience, forgetting that what God hath joined together no man may put asunder, and that apart from his experiences his doctrines are sometimes dead and meaningless words. Paul can only be understood by those who see that to him Christ was all and in all, and Paul His willing and loving slave. As he said to the Corinthians: 'If there is any one who has the assurance to style himself as of Messiah's party, let him think again, let him reflect that whatever part he has in Messiah, I have as much.'¹ Paul has no value, and never thought he had any value except as a witness of Jesus, but such witnesses as he are the men by whom Jesus wins His empire, beginning first at Jerusalem and travelling to the ends of the earth.

2 Cor. x. 7 (A. S. Way).

PART III

THE EXPERIENCES OF PAUL

VI PAUL'S WRITINGS

I. DATA

IN order to pursue our purpose of setting forth Paul's experimental teaching it is necessary to consider the content of his experience, and to give some attention to our sources of information and their characteristics. St. Paul's own letters are our data for a study of his religious experiences; the genuineness of most of the writings traditionally ascribed to him is admitted by friend and foe alike. The Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, the Epistle to the Romans, the Epistle to the Colossians, and Philemon are accepted as Paul's by most competent scholars. The genuineness of 2 Thessalonians and Colossians is no longer seriously questioned. This is true to-day even of 2 Thessalonians, the Pauline authorship of which Wrede and others challenged temporarily with a measure of success. Certain authors think that the Epistle to the Ephesians was not written by Paul, but by a disciple of his who developed some of his ideas; but, until more conclusive evidence against Paul's authorship is produced, it may be treated as his, and in any case it is characteristically Pauline. If Paul's authorship of the Ephesian letter is accepted, it was probably written soon after the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, and it may have been earlier than that to the Philippians; all that can be confidently maintained is, that these four Epistles were a group written during the imprisonment of Paul, most probably in Rome.¹ The Epistle to the

¹ See Note, p. 309.

Hebrews used sometimes to be ascribed to Paul, but from the earliest time its authorship was questioned, and the common view of to-day is that, whoever did write it, Paul did not.

Questions as to whether the second Epistle to the Corinthians is a combination of two letters of Paul—a theory for which there is much to be said—or whether Rom. xvi. was really a separate letter to the Ephesians, for which also there is a good case made out, and a few like problems, need not detain us, as they make little or no difference to our data for a study of Paul's religious experience. We are fortunate, then, in investigating the experience of St. Paul, to have so large a body of material generally accepted, even after the searching scrutiny of modern criticism. The question of the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is immaterial for our purpose.¹

Luke's story of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles is only of secondary importance in regard to his experience. The difference between a first-hand account and a second-hand account of the inward life of a man is immeasurable. Much of what Luke wrote he himself wrote from hearsay, but there are accounts of Paul's speeches which Luke must have heard, and the narratives of his conversion and his conduct on his voyage to Rome are for our purpose of high secondary value. Sayings like 'Whose I am and whom I serve' are obviously Paul's. Luke, one may think, with his historical flair, could hardly have avoided writing a diary, particularly of the voyage. But the primary value of the Book of Acts for our purpose is not in the light it throws on Paul's inner life, but in the record of the outward events of his life and the description of places he visited, which enable us to get nearer to Paul's environment, and to visualize him in a truer historical and geographical setting, than we could otherwise have done. Paul's own letters are not marked by much attention to outward things; he was too intense in his

¹ See Note, p. 309.

devotion to his mission to observe them clearly. They gave very little evidence that he was greatly interested in the outward world. He tends, indeed, to classify outward things under the general term 'flesh.' His letters throw no light on natural scenery. Deissmann, writing on Paul's world, speaks of white houses, rolling hills, sunny snow, shooting big-trees, fields of asphodel and the like, but scenery and colour do not exist for Paul. There is nothing corresponding in his writings to our Lord's love for nature. Sea and cloud and birds and animals are apparently outside his range of interest. What references there are to a wider world than that of his mission are due to the impact of that world on his mission, and it is even then a world of thought and theories. His letters give us few glimpses into the contemporary life such as we find, say, in *Wesley's Journal*. He is interested in men, parties, theories, passions, and the problems of the soul. Ecclesiastical questions interest him because of their relation to his life-mission. 'One thing I do,' is descriptive of the intensity—perhaps the narrow intensity—of the apostle's fiery nature, and yet no one can call him a narrow man. His treatment of problems like those of the Corinthian Church was conspicuously broad and tolerant, but he was absorbed in Christ, in whom he found a solution, not only of his own problems and those of his flock, but of the whole world, and ultimately of the universe. Paul was Christ-intoxicated, drunk of the Spirit. There is, however, one memorable but isolated passage which shows that he was not indifferent to nature groaning and travailing together until now, and in his relations to men and women he was generous and human. He was never so much absorbed in the problems of his own soul as to forget men and women; his letters are full of names of unknown people very dear to him, and his solicitude for his friends in Thessalonica and Philippi, and his thankfulness for their kindness, are indications of a rich humanity. Nevertheless, it is fortunate that we have Luke's narrative of outward events to give us the proper perspective for an

understanding of the writings of a man so much absorbed in spiritual problems as Paul.

Furthermore, the Acts was written by a hero-worshipper, and Luke paints an artistic picture of his hero entirely congruous with the self-portraiture of Paul's letters. That book has values—real, if secondary—in enabling us to understand the inner life of Paul. Some of the apostle's references to his conversion would lose much of their concreteness and vivid force if we had never read Luke's narrative of the startling vision on the Damascus road. There are, no doubt, events recorded in the Acts when Luke was not present, about which he collected the best information he could find, where he may have, after the literary custom of the day, conventionalized his hero's speeches by merely throwing into literary form Paul's typical teachings. While the Acts will be used as little as possible in our treatment of Paul's inner life, no writer can possibly dispense with it altogether. It often makes sayings of his intelligible which would otherwise be obscure.

How different our judgement of the Pastoral Epistles would be if Luke had recorded the events of one more decade. It must not be forgotten that the Acts of the Apostles is not primarily a biography of Paul, but a history of the early expansion of Christianity, and, while Luke throws much light on the career of the apostle, he often selects, not the event which we should like him to have chosen to enable us to understand Paul better, but those events in the life of the greatest of all human instruments in the expansion of Christianity in the Mediterranean world of the first century which best illustrate the progress of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome. The Acts, then, must be considered of secondary value as descriptive of Paul's inner life, although it is our richest source for details which illuminate his written words. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of the conversion narratives.

2. STYLE

It is important to remember that Paul was not a literary man. This does not mean that he was uneducated, but that his culture, although based on careful knowledge, was that of the practical person with a work to do and not that of the man whose first object is literature or research. His mentality was missionary and not academic, and his letters were written to give practical counsel to ordinary people. However difficult to understand those letters may be to us, they must have been intelligible to them. They were written to be understood, and even to be obeyed, and they were written for the most part for mechanics and artisans, not for the mighty and wise. They were even written quickly—the letter to the Galatians probably with vehement rapidity, on the spur of the moment—and most of them to deal with practical issues which arose within the infant Churches by one who was a shepherd and father of his people. They were hardly, with the partial exception of two or three of them, even ‘tracts for the times.’ Their writer certainly did not think of them as literature; they were just the letters of a very busy, devout, but able man to busy people. There are passages in them which are great literature, some in their way unexcelled, but the writer’s purpose, notwithstanding, was not literary. Nothing has obscured their meaning more effectively than their mishandling by academics, who have too often treated them as literature and not as the casual correspondence of a man who was neither an academic himself nor very sympathetic, as Cor. ii. shows, with the academic mentality.

This has been made plain by investigation of recently examined papyri from the dust-heaps of Egypt, which has resulted in the discovery that Paul’s Greek was the colloquial domestic dialect of the ordinary people of his times, now technically named the ‘Koine.’ The classifications of the results by Deissmann, J. H. Moulton, and others demonstrate

the unliterary character of the language Paul wrote and spoke. It would be interesting to know how much written in learned commentaries on the basis of an entirely inaccurate conception of Paul's Greek has been rendered useless by this discovery, and how far the subtle studies of synonyms, and the wide theological generalizations made from assumed difference between almost identical prepositions, have any real value. It is doubtful whether Paul was aware of many of these fine distinctions, and the persons to whom he wrote certainly were not, unless they were very different from people of like culture to-day. Paul was much too practical not to put intelligibility first. He was a man with new ideas, who would adapt and alter such words as he could find to express them, and quite possibly invent new ones, but he would do it in a way a modern live American does, and not in that of a modern German professor. Paul was not thinking about his academic reputation or about his logical consistency when he wrote his letters ; he was thinking about the souls of men ; and this was not because he was a man of slender intellect or slender knowledge, but because he was a man with a burning, compulsive mission. When he used dialectic—and he was too often in the synagogue to forget all he learned at the feet of Gamaliel—he used the dialectic, not of the Greek philosopher, but of the Jewish rabbi. He probably thought the Greek dialectic to be the wisdom of this world, and towards pagans, however cultured, his attitude had always something in it of the Jewish superiority complex, of which Luke's account of Paul's visit to Athens gives striking evidence.

Perhaps it may comfort some people to remark that Paul's letters were read and understood by common people. Deissmann, most human of academics, says that they are understood in the main even to-day by Christians 'unlearned, indeed, who read their Bibles ; by Lutheran peasants, Methodist tradesmen, Moravian women, and Presbyterian miners.' Well, they have often been misunderstood by the

learned. Paul wrote for plain people ; he wrote in the sort of language they could understand. He would have been nonplussed by the German scholar Wrede, who criticized him for using 'hyperboles' such as 'The gospel has been made known to all the world'—which, of course, it had not—because Paul would think 'everybody knows' (if I may use what Wrede might call another hyperbole) what '*tout le monde*' means. Paul used language understood by the people, however much criticized by the Wredes ; that is to say, he was not an academic, but a popular missionary. This does not mean that lexicon and grammar have no place in the interpretation of foreign languages. On the contrary, the debt of the Christian world to the painstaking toil of many generations of Christian scholars can never be discharged, but it does raise the question as to whether learning, however exact, can take the place of Christian experience or of common sense in arriving at an intelligent understanding of the Epistles of Paul. Both are needed.

VII

THE STREAM OF PAUL'S EXPERIENCES

It is not easy to examine and analyse even our own religious experiences, still less those of another man. When we isolate and label them, they are too much like the dried-up botanical specimens of a museum, and too little like flowers waving in the sunshine. A successful analysis of religious experience should be by processes of vivisection. A figure used earlier in our general discussion of religious experience may be more closely considered. Water in a bucket is chemically the same as water in a running stream, but how spiritually different ! Is it too daring to say that judgements on other people's vital experiences are wrong almost in the proportion of their objectivity ? The only possible way of getting at the truth of vital experience is to get inside it, and the nearest approach to this is through corresponding experiences of one's own, ' for who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God.' Hence there are difficulties almost insuperable in dealing with the spiritual experiences of Paul. We can never hope even approximately to see the meaning of spiritual experience except through kindred living experience.

To catalogue the spiritual experiences of Paul is not easy ; to label them is often to lose them. Even to summarize the accounts he gives of his own experience requires a careful and exhaustive study of his letters. No mere analysis of his experiences apart from himself can give us a complete understanding of him. If we are to follow the river of his

experience it is necessary to walk along the banks, to notice the trees, to visualize the surrounding scenery through which the river flows; and it is because experience is fluent like a river that it is difficult to estimate it truly when it is analysed point by point. Hence arises a difficulty which we are unable to solve. The only adequate way to understand the experiences of Paul is to read and re-read every word he wrote. The method of summary and analysis which we are compelled through the limitations of a volume like this to pursue is one which in the nature of the case can only give us an imperfect conception of the wealth of Paul's religion. When such experiences as Paul's are summarized, we only think of them on their conceptual side. It is equally important to remember that the emotional and volitional aspects of the experience ('affects and conations') also need careful attention. The actual experiences which Paul sets down are a small part of the vital experience implied in all that he writes, and it is only when one walks with him step by step through his life, and thinks with him thought by thought, that it is possible to get to his central experiences. The joy, hope, and confidence underlying every word that he wrote, and the elevated experience of liberty and newness of life, cannot be dissected and catalogued. While it is not impossible, by an analysis of his mental states, to set down his 'cognitions'¹ and to some extent his 'conations,' it is impossible to analyse his 'affects,' for the reason that the life and tone of his letters can no more be separated from them than the bloom of a peach can be separated from a peach. All that can be done here is to outline a method of study, but not to develop it.

From the point of view of experience, it is doubtful whether the chronological method usually pursued in Lives of St. Paul is the best one. It must be remembered that his experimental writings do not begin at his conversion,

¹ Cognition; conation; affect; see Note, p. 309.

but at a point in his life at least eighteen years later. He never, in his epistles, tells the story of his conversion. If we had nothing to depend on but his own writings, we should have nothing but a few difficult allusions to this critical event. The experience of Paul to be deduced from his writings begins with his first letter—the Epistle to the Galatians. There seems good reason for believing that this letter was written *circa* A.D. 48.¹ Paul's earliest writing is obviously the earliest account we have from his pen of his religious experience. The Epistle to the Galatians contains statements of Paul's experience in the year *circa* A.D. 48, and also makes references to Christian experiences he enjoyed some eighteen years earlier. It is important to realize the fact that the letters of Paul reveal a man actually experiencing Christianity between the years *circa* A.D. 48 and A.D. 65. The records of his early experience of conversion and vocation have not the evidential value of those which give expression to his inner life at the very moment when he wrote. The fallacious assumption is sometimes made that his conversion, vocation, and special revelations from the Lord are all that is meant by the term 'Paul's religious experience.' These were great experiences, but not more important than his continuous union with Christ—his life in Christ—which expressed itself in all his letters, and is implied, where not expressed, in nearly every word he wrote. Nor must the fact be overlooked that his allusions to his conversion experience, as an event of his past life, are often the result of reflection, and are seen in the light of a long, continuous experience of Christ. When Paul met Ananias at Damascus, it is most unlikely that he said, 'It hath pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' Such an expression was the result, not merely of a great experience in the past and of much reflection on it, but of many years of intimate knowledge of God's Son.

The writing of the Epistle to the Galatians is an

¹ See Note on Chronology, p. 306.

outstanding event in the history of Christianity. This letter, if our belief is correct, is the earliest Christian document. But eighteen years of spiritual development, of which the record is slight, need to be considered before the experiential significance of his letter to the Galatians can be understood. The method by which Paul's experience may be followed as a living stream can then be outlined. First of all we will discuss briefly the light this letter and its early date throw on the wider situation, and then very hurriedly glance at the few facts which give us glimpses into the apostle's inner life in the years in which we have no letters from his hand. But it must be noted that the outline to be given will be little more than an index. Volumes, not a page or two, would be necessary for an adequate treatment of this subject.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the Epistle to the Galatians for an understanding, not merely of the inner life of Paul, but also the general Christian experience of the time when it was written. The conception of Jesus in the letter is mystical and advanced, and its language implies a fixed conception of the Lord which must have been current, and, so far as there is evidence, have been undisputed for many years. A remarkable confirmation of this fact is that in the Epistle to the Romans, written to people who were not his converts, the common experience of the living Christ is so plainly assumed that Paul even speaks to them as to men sharing with him all the joys of the emancipating experience of conscious children of God. While the Epistle to the Galatians does not in so many words call Jesus God, it involves such contacts with a divine being of a higher order of life than our own as fully correspond with men's worship of Him ever since. No intellectual statement of the divine nature of our Lord can do more to satisfy the practical and devotional life of Christian people than the conception of it which obviously underlies this letter.

The mystical conception of Christ has never been more richly expressed than in Paul's words in this letter : ' I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' The modern school of scientific historians do not find it easy to explain how such a conception of Jesus was held by Christians within about twenty years of His death, and, indeed, it is impossible to show that any other conception of Jesus was held by Christians after His resurrection. It is clear that such a conception could not have been invented by Paul without some protest from the earlier disciples of Jesus. Paul had difficulties and controversies enough, but not one on this vital matter. He expressed the common conviction of men who believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, and who enjoyed the experience of His presence as the Holy Spirit in their hearts, who looked for his visible return, but who meanwhile experienced a real and vital communion with Him. At a date almost incredibly early, while the contemporaries of Jesus were still living, many of them only in middle life, multitudes witnessed that Jesus was alive and actually in touch with them. This Jesus whom Paul and his contemporaries had experienced was to their minds not so much a teacher as the Redeemer of mankind. When Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, such convictions were mature and unassailable. Even critics of Christianity acknowledge that there has been nothing so extraordinary in the history of religion. Apart from this conviction, it seems clear that historical Christianity would not have survived, seeing that it is generally admitted that it was based on a belief in the Risen Christ and His supernatural power. How could the Church have come into being and persisted, and how could the New Testament Scriptures have been written and preserved, apart from the belief of early Christians in the Resurrection, and the supernatural quickening they experienced ? It is highly probable

that the very sayings of Jesus would have been lost apart from men's belief in His risen presence and power, for otherwise who would have cared enough to disseminate them? St. Paul's letter to the Galatians brings home to us the rapidity with which the Christian experience had gripped the hearts and minds of men.

The importance of these facts might be plainer to us if we could imagine some man of the first century, with no more knowledge of Christ than 'the scientific historical school' allows, reading for the first time the Epistle to the Galatians. It is no doubt difficult to imagine such a man, for the simple reason that the Jesus of the scientific historians never existed, and one has to construct exceptional circumstances to picture a man in the first century who could have looked at the facts of Christianity from such a point of view. But let us imagine a young Roman gentleman about the year A.D. 30—shall we call him Parnesius?—on his way to Gaul, meeting a Roman soldier—let him be called Secundus—who had witnessed the crucifixion in Jerusalem and had given his own account of the brave and good man who had been recently executed by Pontius Pilate. Let us imagine that the account was as bare as that which some modern critical writers give of Jesus. Let us imagine that such a man some thirty-five years later, exiled in far-away Britain, received from his companion Paul's letter to the Galatians, with no information about it but that it had been written *circa* A.D. 48. What sort of impression would it have made on his mind? When he wrote to his friend to thank him for the letter, what would he have said? He would, perhaps, have shown some interest in the Galatians; he may, indeed, have known much more about them than we do. He would have been struck with the masterful vehemence with which Paul wrote to them, and he would have felt that it was rather shabby of them to have permitted Paul's opponents to seduce them from his teachings. He would have felt that the zeal with which the writer wooed them back, the irony, the

strange Jewish arguments, and above all the tender love which indicated an almost unaccountable earnestness on the part of the writer, needed explanation. He might well have asked, What is this man so excited about? What profit or loss to him what these people think? But, most of all, such a man would have been startled and amazed at what Paul wrote about Jesus Christ and his experience of Him. He may well have written to his friend such words as these: 'But what most surprised me, Secundus, is what this man says about the Christ. He seems to identify him with that Jesus of whom you spoke to me many years ago. You spoke of a Galilean peasant who uttered certain noble words and achieved certain noble deeds, and was executed—as we agreed, rather unnecessarily—by Pontius Pilate. But the Jesus of whom this Paul speaks is a God. Can they be the same? Do you realize that Paul claims that he has communications with him, and revelations from him, and that to him he is the Son of God, revealed in him by his Father? Is it not strange that this man, who was his own contemporarary, should now be living in some higher sphere and yet be his master, and so much dwelling in him that he says, "I live, nevertheless not I live, but Christ liveth in me"; but, then, Jesus was only an artisan, not an emperor; he was even socially inferior to Paul. Is it not strange that Paul should take such a one for his lord and master? Do you see that he claims that the infamous crucifixion of Jesus had some special value in it for mankind, and that he tells the Galatians that Christ would have died in vain if they followed certain Jewish customs, and that in some strange way this artisan, dying on a cross, loved Paul and gave himself for Paul? What is the meaning of this? What difference could his dying make to Paul or to anybody else? Why does he claim that the spirit of Jesus is not his own particular possession, but the common possession of the whole of the community to whose consciousness he appeals for confirmation of his statements? What does it all mean?

So sure, too, is he of his definite communication with this divine being that, when he received revelations from him about his work, he had no need to consult even his followers in Galilee about their meaning, but is satisfied with his own independent knowledge. He talks of having such intimacy with this crucified man who lives again, not even as if he lived in another street of the same town, but as if he lived within his soul. Whoever heard of a sane man glorying in a cross? But Paul, instead of finding crucifixion shameful, actually glories in it, and feels in some inexplicable way that it is a sign of the greatness of Jesus and not of his disgrace. Paul actually himself seems glad to be persecuted, because he finds in his disgrace and persecutions something corresponding with what his honoured master bore. Was this man mad, or has God really visited the earth in the form of a Galilean peasant, who now, risen again, manifests himself to man as his redeemer? There is much on which I should like further information. Do you know anything about this man Paul? Has he written any other letters? Has anybody written about him? I am strangely interested in the story of Jesus. Can it be that he lives? If so, he must have been more than a man.' And so Secundus might be imagined to reply: 'Greeting, Parnesius. I send you some other letters written by Paul of which my friend Luke, a physician and companion of his, has given me copies. I am also sending a book written by Luke himself about the disciples of Jesus¹—Christians they are now called—and about the spread of their religion throughout the empire. It contains much information about Paul, who was beheaded by Nero recently. And I must tell you, Parnesius, that I myself have become a Christian. When I witnessed the deaths of these simple Christian people at the hands of Nero in Rome, I was convinced that their heroism was more than human, and I went to Luke, and he told me

¹ The date of the Acts is considered by most authorities to be later than this, but some think it was written in Paul's lifetime.

how to find the salvation of which Paul spoke ; I sought it, and now I know, strange as it may seem to you, that Jesus is the very Son of God. He has indeed recreated my life. To this I give witness.'

The method suggested for the study of St. Paul is to put ourselves in the place of such a man, and, with the Epistle to the Galatians in our hands, to build up the story of Paul's life and Christian development by means of such illumination as his other letters and the narratives of the Acts of the Apostles throw on the facts and allusions found there. We should naturally first of all try to construct for ourselves the actual life of Paul up to the time that he wrote this letter. We should find references to his earlier days illuminated by some of his later letters, particularly that to the Philippians and the second letter to the Corinthians. We should note how he says of his early life that in the righteousness of the Law he was found blameless, and we should not fail to ask why it was that a man so certificated by the Jewish authorities cried out : ' O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ' Our knowledge to-day of men like Augustine, Luther, and Wesley would enable us to understand the spiritual problem of Paul. A careful study of the autobiographical references in Paul's letters would be made intelligible by Luke's narratives in the Acts of the Apostles. We should track the history of his spiritual development in those eleven years between his first and second visit to Jerusalem.

It is almost certain that the record of his perils and adventures in 2 Cor. xii. contains references to that period, and, apart from that, Barnabas could hardly have called him to the discharge of responsible duties in the Church of Antioch if his toils had not proved his suitability for such an office. And yet, though we know almost nothing about these important years, the one glimpse we do get is most illuminating,¹ for there we see Paul experiencing visions and entering into

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2.

deep communion with God, which he describes as exaltation to the third heaven, endowed with experiences which he finds incommunicable. And of more importance still, as we judge Paul himself would have thought,¹ is the conversation with Christ which he was able to communicate. 'And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelation, wherefore there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted over much. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me, and He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my power is made perfect in weakness.' This vivid experience of Christ must have happened well within ten years of Paul's conversion. It is an invaluable indication of Paul's conception of Jesus, and is the first word that Paul records as the Lord's word to him since He said, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ?'

The other events of his life, except for his account of his second visit to Jerusalem, when he went up by revelation (no doubt that of Agabus),² and its record of his stormy interview with Peter, are from another hand. But the events recorded by Luke of Paul's missionary journey with Barnabas through Cyprus and South Galatia are, of course, of great importance. To some of these happenings Paul makes allusion in this letter. Luke's narrative pictures a confident and competent man with a fixed message and a fixed method. His mission undoubtedly issued in unrecorded developments of his inner life. The controversies with the Jews, which profoundly influenced his thought, as we shall see later, had evidently been of long duration. He did not write to the Galatians his gospel of liberty without having preached it many times earlier. He wrote it before the Council of Jerusalem, to which public conference no allusion is made in his letter to the Galatians because it had not taken place, but it must be remembered, when we read his letter, that the conference confirmed his teaching.

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

² Acts xi. 28.

While little light is thrown by these outward facts on Paul's inner development, there can be no doubt that such a saying as 'It pleased God to reveal His Son in me' is the record, not only of a fact, but of long reflection upon it. We can never know how Paul spoke of his conversion at the time of its occurrence. But we do find that his experience was continuous, and that when he wrote to the Galatians he could say—after what conflicts of soul we know not—'I live, nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me.' The suggestion made above, when followed out in detail, would fit our Parnesius to read this letter with some understanding. The great problems discussed in it need not delay us, as they are dealt with later.

So we take up this letter, and have little difficulty in understanding why it was written. Paul's missionary Churches had been disturbed by men who disputed their founder's authority, and worse—preached that in some ways his doctrine was inadequate, because not only faith in the Messiah Jesus, but actual entrance by the rite of circumcision into the Jewish community, was necessary to salvation. Paul thundered at such men, grieved that his own converts should have so easily apostatized, and yet, regarding them with great tenderness, wooed them back to the gospel, and reminded them of the crucified Jesus he had placarded before their eyes, and of the gifts of the Spirit they had received. He appealed to their actual experience of the truth of his gospel as a proof that mere rites were not necessary, and, indeed, not only were superfluous, but, if regarded as essential to religion, were actually deadly treachery to Christ and His Cross. Furthermore, he met the arguments of the Judaizers by the same type of argument which they propounded. He showed that the grace of God was not merely for a nation, but for the world, and that God's promises were earlier than the Law—the very Law upon which the Judaizers based their arguments. Paul's argument might be contemptuously called rabbinical, but

what other argument would have been effective with rabbis? He certainly beat them with their own weapons on their own ground. When he concluded his scriptural arguments, he gave to the Galatians practical Christian advice, saying that the law they were to follow was 'the law of Christ,' which meant bearing one another's burdens.

What is of supreme importance for our study is the unconscious revelation Paul gives of himself. We have already recited his own account of his direct relations with Christ; of the personal revelations which changed his life, created his mission, and inspired his apostolate to the Gentiles. In none of his letters does he reveal himself more plainly than in this. It is significant that the great mystical truth for which he stands he claims to be held by Peter as well as by himself.¹ 'I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' Much of Paul's gospel is summed up in that passage. The Christian life meant, to Paul, death to the world. Baptism, as he shows in his letter to the Romans, was the symbol of that death. In his own life-experience, this is expressed as crucifixion with Christ, but the Christian experience which revolutionized his life and the life of the early Christians was that such death to the world was followed by a resurrection life, the source of which was union with the living Christ. This Paul experienced so vividly that he said, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And then, putting it in the simplest terms, he says that his life is really faith on the Son of God, 'who loved me and gave Himself for me'—that is to say, trust in and fellowship with Christ who lives, but who had so dominated the life of Paul by His death that it became a living compulsion in his life. What this death meant to Paul is even more emphatically expressed by the words in the postscript, written by his own hand, to the letter:

¹ Gal. ii. 14.

'God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world was crucified to me and I unto the world.' The Cross, despite all its ignominy, was such a vivid and potent expression of the love of Jesus that Paul seems to hurl it defiantly at the men who shrink from its infamy, and in this sign he conquered.

The inner life of Paul is easier to follow during the years succeeding the issue of his first letter. There are gaps in his writings, no doubt, which our information from Luke, rather of historical than psychological value, does not fill up, although it gives an excellent background for the study of Paul's letters. Again we must be content with a mere index outline. Important events in his outward life between dates at which he wrote to the Galatians and the Thessalonians are recorded by Luke, especially the second missionary journey, which brought him into Europe, where he visited the Churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth, to which he afterwards wrote letters. Luke's narrative tells us of his visits to those and other cities, including Athens.¹ From Corinth he wrote his affectionate letters to the Thessalonians, and during his third missionary journey, when at Ephesus,² he wrote his first letter to Corinth, and other letters, one of which may have been 2 Cor. x.-xii. When he left Ephesus he wrote his second letter, or at least 2 Cor. i.-ix. The Epistle to the Romans was probably written from Corinth, which he seems to have re-visited just before he returned to Jerusalem, where he was arrested. He spent the next two years in prison in Caesarea, whence, after an eventful voyage, he reached Rome for trial before Caesar. These letters, especially those to the Corinthians, are extraordinarily self-revealing. The man Paul, with all his strength and weakness, is pictured by his own hand, but what is most important for our purpose is the fact that his experience of living fellowship with his risen Lord underlies everything

¹ Acts xvi. 11-xviii. 17.

² Acts xix.

that he says, and the stream of his experience can only be truly followed by those who carefully examine this illuminating writing. The other letters of Paul were written from prison—probably from Rome. It is difficult to say whether the Epistle to the Philippians was the first or the last of the four letters of that period. But the letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon are closely interconnected. One typical phrase of Paul occurs with great frequency in these letters—the phrase ‘in Christ.’ And the experiences of the apostle are perhaps more vigorously illuminated by these pregnant words than by any long catalogue of experiences which one might write down.

Whether or no the Pastoral Epistles as they stand at present are from Paul's hand it is impossible to prove, but the lack of other documents to confirm them makes them an insecure foundation of argument. The second letter to Timothy is full of biographical allusions. It is the letter of a man prepared to die, and expecting to do so. The words describing his delivery from the mouth of the lion, his loneliness when all except Luke had forsaken him, his human longing to see once more the dear face of Timothy, his much-loved son in the gospel, have the marks of authenticity upon them, and we may well leave him, saying, as we are sure he did, ‘I am already being offered up, and the time of my departure is come.’ ‘I have kept the faith; I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.’

VIII

SUMMARY OF PAUL'S EXPERIENCE

A CATALOGUE of Paul's experiences, as we have said, must, in the nature of the case, be unsatisfactory. The overwhelming exaltation of spirit which gives beauty to the spiritual witness of Paul is appreciated only by fellow feeling. The affects of Paul, to use the psychological description of the emotional aspects of experience, considered as subject-matter for examination, cannot be submitted to the vivisector without murder. So much do we feel this that we shall make no attempt to catalogue them. We can only summarize, with a few explanatory notes, the experiences of Paul generally in their 'cognitional' aspects. And that in itself confirms the view that an adequate understanding of such experiences necessitates not merely the isolation of a moment or event of experience for analysis, but imaginative companionship with the apostle in the course of his life, and a sympathetic fellowship with him day by day as he works and writes. Such study must be left to the reader, but the importance of it should never be forgotten in any attempt which is made to summarize religious experiences, and even less in attempts to analyse them.

Paul's account of his inner life may be divided into two sections: (i.) his experiences; (ii.) his experience. The first consist of the experiences of conversion, vocation, and special revelation which he records, or to which he makes reference as past events; the second is the vital experience of union with Christ which underlies each of his letters, and to which he gives immediate witness. Most of Paul's

experiences can be found by the simple process of extracting the passages in which he uses the first personal pronoun 'I' or 'We' but his 'experience' is more difficult to set down.

A careful reading of the letters will show that these definite direct professions of experience are less in number than might be expected. The real experience of Paul underlies most of his words. Careful and constant reading and personal investigation of his words is essential to any one who wishes to enter into the soul of this man whose daily experience of Christ so thrilled him with joy and gladness. We can, however, by the method suggested, summarize his definite allusions to the outstanding religious experiences of his life.

Before we summarize the experiences of Paul, we must at least, to make them intelligible, have in view the salient facts of his pre-Christian history. We know little, though we may speculate much, about Paul's early spiritual development. But some facts may be assumed with confidence. He evidently had imbibed the serious Hebrew view of life from his childhood. He was well versed in the Old Testament. He was possessed in youth with an earnest desire to serve the God of his fathers. He was sincere to the length of fanaticism. His zeal won the encomiums of his fellow countrymen. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. In the righteousness which is in the Law he was found blameless. He must have prayed much from his youth upwards. It may be, as some affirm, that even in his pre-Christian days he had mystic experiences. He had received as a heritage which he valued the Jewish conception of a righteous God, and regarded the Scriptures as a prize so sacred as to give the Jews a privileged position among the nations of the world. He meditated in the Law of God day and night, and loved it. He took over with him into Christianity the spiritual knowledge of the Jews, and never questioned its truth or value. He had a right to say, 'Behold I have a goodly heritage.'

But his quest for righteousness before his conversion brought him no satisfaction. He was conscious that his was a divided personality. Flesh warred against spirit, and spirit against flesh. The exact meaning and force of Rom. vii. has been much discussed. Sometimes that vivid description of the conflicts of a human soul is described as a mere generalization. Sometimes it has been claimed that its reference to Paul's experience is to no specific period of his life, and no doubt it is meant to be a picture of the human soul, and the struggles between flesh and spirit which take place in it. But it is difficult to understand an exposition of it which fails to see that such vital and graphic writing could have been anything but autobiographical. Paul no doubt felt that what had gone on in his own soul was a picture of what takes place generally in the soul of man, or will take place in men who are earnest in their pursuit of righteousness; but the bitterness of his own futile spiritual strivings gave him the key for the interpretation of the souls of other men. So graphic a piece of psychological analysis can only have come from introspection. And when it is read in connexion with the peace into which the soul entered through its deliverance by Christ Jesus, it is clear that it describes a struggle which issued in peace and victory.¹ Few things can be more plain to an unprejudiced student with any sensitiveness to spiritual reality than that this, whatever else it may signify, is a description of Paul's spiritual condition at the time of his conversion. He, a wretched man struggling hopelessly for self-control, finds it, not by his struggling, but through the intervention of a great deliverer.

But the seventh chapter of Romans only deals with one aspect of Paul's spiritual condition before his conversion. A further complication to be noted, is his persecuting zeal and its effect on his mind. Nothing haunted Paul more in later days. He was the least of all the apostles, because

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

he had been a persecutor and less than the least of all saints. That bitter memory caused him, as an old man, to go further and to call himself the chief of sinners.¹ His one excuse is that he persecuted ignorantly through unbelief, and perhaps when, in his Christian race, he tried to forget the things that were behind, his Saviour's prayer comforted him: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' What was the reaction on Paul's mind of the course of persecution he had undertaken with fanatical zeal and sincerity against Christians? He felt, no doubt, he was glorifying God, and actually performing works of supererogation which might be counted to him for merit. But was he altogether satisfied? Was this Christian movement which he was trying to extirpate in the interests of his ancestral religion as evil as the rabbis thought it? He had probably heard Stephen speak in the Cilician synagogue in Jerusalem, and even been impressed.² Those words of the dying martyr had a ring of amazing sincerity about them. It seems probable that there was at least a sub-conscious antipathy in Paul's mind to his own outward religious practices, and particularly to his mission of persecution, which was an extreme expression of them at the time of his conversion.

Hence, when on his way to Damascus, Paul's condition was that of an intensely earnest man, conscious, notwithstanding his reputation for righteousness, of inward defeats, and uneasy as to whether his outward actions—especially the extreme courses to which religious and patriotic loyalty to Judaism were driving him—were very satisfactory. While it is true that he was sincere, it must not be supposed that his motives were entirely unmixed, or that there was no mingling of pride or ambition in his action. The human elements were always strong in Paul. A man destined for a great earthly career must have 'the common touch.' After his conversion as well as before it he buffeted his

¹ 1 Tim. i. 16.

² Acts vi. 9.

body to keep it under. But on his way to Damascus we may think of Paul as a wrong-headed but right-hearted seeker after God, who stumbled upon a hidden treasure in a field accidentally, at the very time he was pursuing the wrong route for its acquisition. It was to such a man that the direct experience of God came.

We can now turn to the two divisions of Paul's account of his inner life.

(i.) PAUL'S EXPERIENCES

A. CONVERSION.—Of this he gives no detailed account, but he makes many illuminating allusions to it.

Group 1. Definite allusion to events in the Damascus road as recorded by Luke :

- (i.) I saw the Lord.¹ The Lord appeared to me.²
- (ii.) I was apprehended.³
- (iii.) It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.⁴
- (iv.) The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁵

Group 2. Allusions to the spiritual significance of his conversion.

- (i.) Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?
I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁶
- (ii.) There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.⁷
- (iii.) Wherefore we know Christ no more after the flesh. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.⁸
- (iv.) The grace which hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.⁹
- (v.) Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief ; howbeit, I obtained mercy.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4-6.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 8.

⁴ Rom. vii. 24-5.

⁵ 1 Tim. i. 1-10.

⁶ Phil. iii. 12.

⁷ Rom. viii. 1.

⁸ 1 Tim. i. 16.

⁹ Gal. i. 16.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. v. 16-19.

Group 3. In much of his teaching it is almost certain Paul is thinking of his conversion; such passages as 'who loved me, and gave Himself for me'; 'God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'; 'God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, quickened us in Christ Jesus'; or 'who delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of the son of His love,'⁴ were charged with emotion and based on a definite experience of conversion. And they are enriched by continuous personal experience confirmed by corresponding experiences of other men. Perhaps the most important fact in the conversion is that Paul met a person, was apprehended by a person, became the bond-slave of a person, was transformed by the love of a person.

Group 4. Some think that passages which refer to the glory of that light reflect the experiences of the conversion.⁵

B. VOCATION AND APOSTOLATE.—This experience of Paul is distinguished from that of his conversion; for although many passages suggest that it was part of it, others are rather ambiguous, and leave us to wonder whether the special revelation referred to in the letter to the Ephesians (iii. 3) was not in the Temple at Jerusalem⁶ or at some other time. That Paul thought his conversion was, amongst other things, a definite vocation is not questioned. His vision of the Lord, he says, constituted his apostleship,⁷ but how far his conversion experience was to him at the time a conscious vocation is difficult to determine. The accounts in the Acts are not consistent on this point.⁸ What can be confidently asserted is that Paul came to realize that his vision of the Lord was his apostolic commission, but at what precise date he realized this we do not know. A chronological study of his

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

² Rom. v. 8.

³ Eph. ii. 4.

⁴ Col. i. 13.

⁵ 2 Thess. i. 2-11; 1 Cor. xv. 44-9.

⁶ Acts xxii. 17.

⁷ 1 Cor. ix. 2.

⁸ Compare Acts ix. and xxiii. with Acts xxvi. 16.

accounts of his vocation suggest that he came more and more to see the richness of its meaning as his life and missionary work went on. And the late Epistle to the Ephesians gives us the best account of the full meaning of that vocation. The facts of this experience are that his vision of Christ made him an apostle¹; that his apostolate was direct from God and independent of men,² as he insists in his letter to the Galatians; that his apostolic vocation was especially to the Gentiles³; that his preaching was a compulsion, not a profession: 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel'⁴; that there had been committed to him an ambassadorial ministry of reconciliation, both of men to God⁵ and of men to each other.⁶ That of men to God is most emphasized in 2 Cor. vii., and that of man to man in Eph. ii. These are all attributed by Paul to definite supernatural experiences of God in Christ.

C. EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL REVELATIONS.—Luke refers to them more often than Paul, and, although the modern view that Luke said 'revelation' where Paul, or we, should say 'common sense,' is very doubtful, it must be admitted that an account of another man's inner experience is not of the same value as his own. His allusions to his apostleship and vocation as revelation need not be cited. He claims an ability to speak in tongues 'more than they all,' but he much prefers intelligible talk.⁷ He makes special reference to the revelations of his earlier Christian days in Cilicia,⁸ and, although he dare not reveal the meaning of his rapture into the third heaven, he does tell us of the Lord's comforting word when he prayed in vain for the removal of the thorn in the flesh; 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'⁹ He tells us that he went up to Jerusalem once by revelation,¹⁰ and he may be speaking of 'revelation' when he gives the Thessalonians information about the quick and the

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 2.² Gal. i. 16-18.³ Gal. i. 17.⁴ 1 Cor. ix. 16.⁵ 2 Cor., v. 19 f.⁶ Eph., ii. 16.⁷ 1 Cor. xiv. 18.⁸ 2 Cor. xii. 2-9.⁹ 2 Cor. xii. 8.¹⁰ Gal. ii. 1.

dead, but this may be, on the other hand, a quotation of something that Jesus said when on earth.¹

He does not speak much about his revelations, but he implies them when he writes concerning revelations from the Lord.² But Paul was sensitive to the fact of 'pretended revelation,'³ about which he warns the Thessalonians, and, although quite conscious that he was the recipient of divine inspirations himself, he is most careful to distinguish them from his own opinions. Nothing establishes the validity of Paul's revelations more than the fact that when he counsels the Corinthians he repeatedly tells them that this or that is not from the Lord. How many unrecorded revelations and inspirations does such a sentence imply? But in the first of these letters he claims to know 'the mind of Christ.'⁴ Paul was quite conscious that he 'knew in part,' that 'he saw through a glass darkly,'⁵ but he had no doubt about the part he knew. He does not confuse his own judgements and opinions with direct revelations from his Lord.

(ii.) PAUL'S EXPERIENCE

Paul's principal experiences are of union with Christ. Except in the phrase 'in Christ,' they are much more implied than expressed. No summary can be given of references and allusions to such a union except by comment, verse by verse, on everything he wrote down. From his union with Christ issue his deepest words. Union with Christ was Paul's daily experience.

'To me to live is Christ.' Perhaps communion with Christ is even a better expression of what Paul meant, for there is nothing of mystical absorption and fusion in his experience. His union with Christ was just an intimate companionship with an unseen friend. Paul was what Deissmann calls a reacting mystic; that is, he was a man who responded to divine grace given to him. This intimacy,

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15.

² 2 Cor. xii. 1.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 2 (*A. S. Way's translation*).

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 16.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12.

though profound, was that of servant with master—He was his friend because he did whatsoever He commanded him—and also that of younger to elder brother in a common filial relationship in the family of God to the heavenly Father. They were co-heirs. This intimacy underlies everything Paul wrote. Paul claims that he has the mind of Christ, and out of that mind gives counsel to the Corinthians. The grace of Christ is assured to him by definite conversation with the Saviour. The strength of Christ gives him the power to do all things. From the love of Christ he could not be separated. It is the constraint of his life, not merely conceived as an historical event, but as constant experience. 'What shall separate me from the love of Christ?' His effort is to live out the life of Christ in his own life, which he does by the spirit of Christ which is in him. Paul's figure of dying with Christ in baptism, and rising with him, is important for an understanding of his union with Christ. There are passages which, taken by themselves, might seem to imply that Paul regarded the ritual process of baptism as the *modus operandi* of salvation. But it is the man who dies with Christ who is to be baptized, not the man who by being baptized dies with Christ. And dying with Christ means for Paul, as his two great sayings in the letter to the Galatians show, that a man must have taken up his cross to be the Lord's disciple and have followed Him to Calvary in order to say, 'I have been crucified with Christ'; or, as the other saying shows, implies a world dead to him, and his death to the world. It is the man who renounces the world-values who has died with Christ in baptism and risen again. In that age a man who by baptism publicly associated himself with Christ was a man who had cut himself off from the world. The death and resurrection of Jesus are re-enacted in a man's soul.

And to rise with Christ means also to ascend with Him into heavenly places, and to live in the Christ-sphere of life, sharing Christ's valuations. It is a life in heavenly places in

Christ Jesus ; a life of communion with Christ Jesus ; a life, to use his favourite phrase, in Christ. But what is a very striking fact in this Christian mysticism is Paul's realization of its limitations. The men who have thus risen are bidden to act, to set their minds on the things above, to put off the old man, to put on the new.¹ Their union with Christ will not bring about a magical salvation. The power is present in Christ, their risen companion, to transform their lives, but they must use it. They must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, God working in them. Paul claims that Christ dominates him. He lives, yet not he, but Christ ; and he indicates what the domination is in the words, ' He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Paul lived in communion with one whose companionship meant love, even as His death on the cross meant love. So the love of Christ constrains him. Paul's union with Christ was a daily companionship in which he was invigorated by the Saviour's love.

The union of Paul with Christ cannot be expressed by a catalogue of quotations from his writings. The more one reads them, the more one feels that they are soaked with this experience of union. It is not only his own testimony to personal union with Christ that matters, but the fact that he takes it for granted in the lives of those to whom he writes. Paul's sense of the dominance of the living Christ in his own life is a much more impressive testimony to the resurrection than the witness of a man here and there to the fact. As Dr. T. R. Glover shows so skilfully in his book *The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World*, it was the lives of Christians transformed by the Risen Christ in them that brought about the conquest of the world by Christianity. The dynamic lay in the sense of the presence of Christ in the believer. ' The Lord stood at my side and put strength into me,' wrote Paul quite simply about a dreadful moment in his life.² That sense of a present person whose love dominated him underlies all Paul's writings.

¹ Rom. vi. 12 ; Col. iii. 5 ; Eph. ii. 1, &c.

² 2 Tim. x. 17.

There is one recurrent phrase of his to which attention must be paid—the phrase ‘in Christ,’ which occurs one hundred and sixty-four times in his writings. This term is much more common in the later than in the earlier letters, but it is quite fair to speak of it as Paul’s most characteristic expression. Much study has been given in recent years by foreign scholars to this phrase. It can hardly be doubted that it expresses union with Christ, though to avoid misunderstanding it is better to say communion or fellowship, because however much Christians are united to Christ, they are always independent persons in fellowship with an independent person. Deissmann in particular has written much on this phrase, but some of his conclusions do not carry conviction to Anderson Scott, who urges that the significance of the phrase varies with the context. The words ‘in Christ’ are often used by Paul to describe his personal experience, but more generally they are applied to the experience of all Christians. One fact sometimes ignored is that the phrase seems in some contexts to mean ‘in the Church’; to be ‘in Christ’ means to be in the Christian fellowship—that is to say, ‘in the Church’ and to be ‘in the Church’ means to be ‘in Christ.’ Anderson Scott speaks of ‘the bold way in which Paul equated Christ with the Church.’¹ In 1 Cor. xii. 12 he writes, ‘As a human body is one, and has many members—all the members of the body forming one body in spite of their number—so also is *Christ*!’—though the conclusion which any one familiar with Paul’s metaphor of the body, and closely following his thought in this context, might naturally anticipate, would be ‘so also is the Church.’ Calvin’s comment is, ‘He calls Christ the Church.’

In other contexts, to be ‘in Christ’ means to be in the Spirit—‘the Lord is that Spirit.’² It is not difficult to see how ‘the Spirit of Christ’ and the ‘Spirit’ convey the same idea to Paul, but what of the Church, His body? Is not the

¹ Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 154.

² 2 Cor. iii. 18.

explanation that Paul cannot think of the Church as anything else than a fellowship of Christian men quickened by the 'Spirit'? All those who were in the body—that is to say, who were members of the community—were a fellowship created by the Spirit of Christ. The Church, to Paul's mind, was not a corpse, but a body of which the life was Christ, or, more literally, the 'Spirit of Christ'; what the Spirit of Christ was to the body of Jesus of Nazareth when on earth, it became to His body, which was now not a single individual, but a society—the Church—after His Resurrection. The fellowship of the early Christians was a fellowship of the Holy Ghost. The Church was no chance human institution, composed of men and women with common interests, but a divine society, which found its fellowship, not in its religious aspirations, but in its divine quickening. Its corporate life was Christ's life, and apart from that life it would have been a corpse and not a body. Hence to be in such a body was to be in Christ, whose Spirit was the life of the body, and for a man to be in Christ meant that he was in the fellowship of the Spirit of Christ, and hence in fellowship with the whole body quickened by it. This identification of the Church with Christ is fundamental to the teaching of Paul. Distinctions made in our own day between 'Churchianity' and Christianity involve an entire misunderstanding of the meaning of the Church. The Church, as Paul says, is Christ, and Christ is the Church; to be in one is to be in the other. If that be not true in fact to-day of some religious community with which a man is associated, it only means that such a community has no right to be called a Church. Nothing is more important in our own time than to realize this sacredness of Christ's body, which can only be affirmed by such Christian fellowships as claim the real presence of the Lord and the fulfilment of His promise that 'where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I will be in the midst.'

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the words '*in Christ*' for an understanding of Paul's inner experience.

But what *Christ* means in the phrase is even more important than what *in* means. For to be 'in Christ' is to be in union with one who is a Son of God revealed in Paul. The Christ of his experience is the datum we must, in the last analysis, accept if we are to understand him. And we shall find that that Christ, as men have found for two thousand years, 'Accepted by the reason, solves all questions in the earth and out of it.'

What does he mean by Christ? It is not easy to find a harmony of all Paul's references to his Lord. His identification of Jesus and Christ has been dealt with in Part II.¹; but what of his identification of Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit? He uses the term 'Spirit' and 'Christ' at times interchangeably. He says the Lord was that Spirit. In Rom. viii. there seems to be no distinction between what he means by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ. On the other hand, he uses the words Spirit and Christ in different senses in other places. 'No man can call Jesus Lord save by the Holy Spirit,' and I think even Rom. viii. 16: 'The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, and, if sons, heirs, co-heirs with Christ' suggests such a difference, although the parallel passage in Galatians might modify that view. To a convinced Trinitarian there is not much difficulty in this. The persons of the Trinity, says Illingworth, are 'mutually inclusive, not mutually exclusive,' and, therefore, thinking of them at one time as identical and at another time as personal and separate has been no greater difficulty to ordinary Christians than it seems to have been to Paul.

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Experiences such as Paul's, considered as mental phenomena, consist not merely in cognitions, but also in affects and conations. They are emotional and volitional as well as conceptual. To describe the emotional content

¹ p. 52.

of Paul's experience would need a most careful analysis of all his writings. We must be content to call to mind the fact that his experiences of Christ made him glow with joy ; the very mention of the dear name caused him more than once to break into paeans of praise, which are not strictly relevant to his logic, and sometimes ruin his grammar. He says, in the midst of some argument, ' Christ '—and then irrelevantly to his argument, but relevantly to his experience—' in whom we have ' this or that or the other. Christ meant to him liberty, joy, peace, love, brotherliness. The cry, ' Abba, Father,' comes from the spirit of His Son in his own heart. His contact with Jesus meant a resurrection for him from a grave of trespasses and sins, and an ascension to the shining heights of heavenly places—a translation from a kingdom of darkness into realms of light ; a deliverance from Spiritual conflict to harmony and peace. Paul's affects are clearly expressed, and even more clearly implied, in every letter he wrote. The emotional tone of the epistles is as easy to feel as it is difficult to describe. His letters are the writings of a man who rejoices in the Lord alway, and has learnt in whatsoever state he is therein to be content. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. His gospel was a realized power of God to salvation to him before he declared it as a message for the world.

Paul's experience may be summarized as one of intimate friendship with his unseen Lord, beginning in the extraordinary personal experience of his conversion, but continuing through a life of outward elation and depression, struggle and difficulty, success and discouragement, expressing itself in heroic deeds, constant preaching of God's love for men, as well as in the vigorous thinking which is transmitted to us in his letters. He became a new creature ; all things became new. Apart from his experience these things could not have been. Everything which he did of distinctive value to the world issued from his vital and vitalizing experience of God in Christ.

PART IV

PAUL'S EXPERIMENTAL DOCTRINE

(PERSONAL)

IX

EXPERIENTIA DOCET

THERE can be no question that Paul's experience transformed his own life and conduct. What was its effect on his thought? The claim to be made in the next chapters is that his distinctive doctrines are the result of his experience, though not of experience only. But experience, such as Paul's, gives life to material which is otherwise dead, and, more than that, it is creative of new life. If one could imagine a tropical river to be dug up and bodily transferred to some temperate zone, it would bring to life seeds already there, and bring with it new life of its own from the tropics. Such was the effect of the flood of divine experience on Paul's mind.

One of the recent books on Paul most to be prized is J. Gresham Machen's *Origin of Paul's Religion*. Its scathing criticisms of modern naturalistic theories of Paul and Jesus remain unanswered and unanswerable, and no more admirable examination of the theories of Bousset, Wrede, and the like exists. Machen's work, marked as it is by competent scholarship and genuine evangelical faith, has put the present writer under such obligation that he hardly cares to challenge the author's opinions. But the American professor's desire to show the shallowness of earlier theories based on Paul's experience has perhaps drawn generalizations from him about the value of experience which need some modification, if not restatement. It must not be forgotten that many Continental authors who write about Paul's experiences regard them as purely natural subjective phenomena. Where a man disbelieves in the

possibility of human and divine communication, and then builds up a theory about the experience of one whose mental and spiritual life are meaningless unless God and man do communicate with each other, the result must be as futile as a discussion about wooden doors which were not made out of wood. But Christian experience with Christ in it is a very different thing. And Paul's experience, as Machen understands it, is valid objective experience of a Jesus whose glorified body he claims to have seen with his human eyes.

This is what Machen writes : ' Religion, in Paul, does not exist apart from theology, and theology does not exist apart from religion. Christianity, accordingly, to Paul is both a life and a doctrine—but logically doctrine comes first. The life is the expression of the doctrine, and not vice versa. Theology as it appears in Paul is not a product of Christian experience, but the setting forth of those facts by which Christian experience has been produced. The whole of Paulinism is based upon the redemptive work of Christ.'

These words, except for the first and last sentences, the first of which we accept and the last of which might be accepted from one point of view though not from another, give an account of experience and doctrine exactly opposite to that of this book. If what is meant by the last sentence is that Paulinism is the religion of redemption, it is of course obvious that, if there had been no redemptive work, Paulinism could not have existed, which amounts to little more than saying if there were no Christ there would have been no Christianity. But this does not solve the problem of Paul's actual construction of his *distinctive* doctrines. There might, and indeed do, exist more than one explanation of what the doctrine of redemption really is. We want to find what it was in Paul which caused him to construct the particular doctrines of redemption which we call Pauline. Our view is that the vital factor was his personal experience of God in Christ, which liberated his soul and transformed his life.

While I admit that it is true to say that religion and

theology are always joined together in Paul's writings, I do not admit that it is impossible at least as a matter of thought to separate them. Machen himself in one place allows the distinguishability of life and doctrine, since he writes: 'Christianity, according to St. Paul, is both life and doctrine, but logically the doctrine comes first. The life is the expression of the doctrine, and not vice versa.' But how can this be? Consider the relation in any other sphere of life to doctrine. Would any one argue that zoology comes first and animals after; or that botany is explained by plants and not, vice versa, plants by botany? And, indeed, Paul himself settled this question when he said, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'

Theology is a vague term which is often used to include speculative dogmas rather cosmological than religious in character. The doctrines which we are treating are those which deal with a religion that is 'life indeed.' When of real value such doctrines are the result of something deeper than speculation.

All Divine Revelations which we find in the Bible were once direct human experiences. They have been preserved because men felt they were true. If not, they are only ratiocinations; but when they come, as the most venerable seem to have done, from non-ratiocinating men, or from men of quite defective logical powers, of what use is such reasoning to us? No true religion can find its basis in anything else than the experience of some one or other at some time or other.

No doubt it is quite true of modern men, as it was of St. Paul, who was the child of a great civilization, that the mind to which experience comes is not *tabula rasa*. But that is very different from saying that his distinctive doctrines were the cause of his religion. Can any one imagine that Paul found salvation because he believed in his alleged doctrine of the Atonement, or that he was justified by faith because he held that doctrine? Whatever

the conversion experience of Paul meant, it meant conversion, regeneration, assurance ; but Paul knew nothing of these doctrines. His *distinctive* doctrines were amongst the things which he afterwards apprehended in Christ Jesus. His life was transformed, not because he held a set of doctrines, but because Christ appeared to him.

Paulinism is a rather vague word. It is a word Paul himself would have disliked. It is sometimes used as a comprehensive description of all Paul's teaching. It is sometimes—and I think more justifiably—used of Paul's distinctive doctrines. Many of Paul's doctrines did, of course, not issue directly from his experience. They were traditions he had received. He did not give, so far as we have evidence, complete scientific investigation to theological doctrines. He was not a Thomas Aquinas or John Calvin, or even a comparative religionist. He was an Evangelical missionary. It may be that some of the doctrines which he received and took for granted from other people—as, for instance, his apocalyptic in his letter to Thessalonica—might have been differently expressed if he had investigated them more independently and carefully. Some of his teachings to the Corinthians he plainly called his own opinions, and divine inspiration of them he disclaimed. The very fact that he says such and such words were not from the Lord suggests that he was not convinced of their finality. His theistic doctrines were not original ; they were his splendid heritage from Judaism. However true such doctrines are, they are not for that reason distinctively Pauline. On the other hand, there are doctrines of his which are obviously the product of his own thinking. Sometimes we have them first in a crude form and then in a careful one. The material of the Epistle to the Galatians is much more carefully expounded in the first eight chapters of Romans than in the earlier letter. Had Paul thought out the question of national and international religion when he wrote to the Romans as fruitfully as when he wrote his later letter to

the Ephesians? A study of his letters reveals the man thinking and rethinking some of the great truths he declared. And the greatest formative factor in this thinking is experience of Christ, with whom he lived in daily communion, and 'whose mind' he claimed.

Doctrines are not experience, though they are sometimes explanations of experience and deductions from experience. Other elements enter into them than experience.¹ Thoughts, reasons, general knowledge, world outlook, and many other things, form the body of a doctrine, but experience is the soul. A mind like Paul's could never rest satisfied unless it strove to answer questions which his joyous experience asked, and which his beliefs and knowledge challenged. A man's experience of God is qualitatively greater than his other experiences, but it is quantitatively less than his total experience. Paul was compelled to harmonize his religious experience with his human experiences, his religious knowledge, and his general world view. His original religious doctrines were the product of such a harmony. When Paul was converted, and Christ took such conscious possession of his life that he could say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' his life received a new orientation. His old conflicts ceased; he heard a voice which said to strong passion, 'Peace, be still.' But that did not mean that he was lulled to slumber. 'That the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened,' he prays for the Ephesians, and that prayer for intellectual illumination was part of a prayer for the increasing endowment of Resurrection power. He often, no doubt, offered that prayer for himself and found it was progressively answered. New problems were always arising in his work which needed new solutions. His distinctive doctrines sometimes arose from actual historical situations. This seems to have been true of the Christology of his letter to the Colossians. The solutions of the problems he faced were always based on his knowledge—his intuitive

knowledge—of the mind of Christ. He knew the mind of Christ because he lived in Christ and Christ lived in him. His inspirations were the result of his communion with, and experience of, Christ. But Paul's most difficult problems arose out of his own inherited beliefs. His deepest doctrines arose from his attempts to orientate his problems to his new experience. The experience of God's love in the Cross, of the Saviour who lived in him, was an exuberant experience of liberation and joy, and an experience in which all human beings could share ; his life-work was to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ—Christ in you, Gentiles, as well as in me, the hope of glory.

Two Jewish beliefs which were in his blood, and which he never ceased to hold, were difficult to harmonize with his experience. They were his belief in the Law—the Torah—and his reverence for it, and his belief that the Jews were the specially chosen and privileged people of God. Now, the only two epistles of Paul which can be called essays—the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians—tackle these problems. Many references to them can be found in other writings, but his thought-out solutions are to be found in his two letters which most approximate to what we call a theological treatise. The doctrine of personal salvation, of which Rom. i.—xi. is a statement and defence, is a harmony of Paul's experience of personal salvation with his views about the Torah. It states the ethical character of evangelical experience against the objections made on moral grounds, objections which he had heard expressed by others, and which found an echo in his own mind. Paul's statement of the great experimental evangelical doctrines is to be traced to the need he found in his inner consciousness of ethicizing his experience. He orientated the Torah to his experience of God's liberating love in Christ.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is Paul's account of the social and national application of the universal love of God

particularly as it operates from Christ's Cross. It is his last word on the Jew and Gentile question, and, while it means a repudiation of some of his inherited Jewish convictions, it proclaims the true relation of Christianity to all nations, including the Jews, and gives the profoundest solution of inter-racial problems. Just as the Epistle to the Romans ethicizes the personal experiences of Paul, so the Epistle to the Ephesians ethicizes inter-social relations amongst men by showing the social implications of the common experiences of Christians in the Cross of Christ. A partial solution of the Jewish problem is to be found in chaps. ix.-xi. of Romans, but this is superseded by the more mature teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Our proposition is that the evangelical and social doctrines of the Apostle Paul are ethical solutions of the problems which were raised by the apparent inconsistency between the joy, confidence, and liberty of his experiences of God in Christ and the unfulfilled commandments of God in the Law ; and between his own experience of the universal love of Christ in the Cross, confirmed by other Gentile converts, and the divine choice of the Jewish nation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS AS
EXPERIMENTAL DOCTRINE

X

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS AS EXPERIMENTAL DOCTRINE

MATTHEW ARNOLD wrote his *St. Paul and Protestantism* more than fifty years ago. It is in some ways the most illuminating book on the Epistle to the Romans written in modern times. To set aside the laborious works of German and British theologians and to read its lucid pages is to come out of a dark and tangled jungle into the light of day. The key-word of this brilliant essay is experience, and that word points the way to all true interpretation of St. Paul. Matthew Arnold did much to slay the burdensome logomachies which had been untruly labelled 'Paulinism.' It is quite likely that he was unfair to many Calvinists in his strictures on Calvinism—I do not know their writings sufficiently well to say—but I know that his references to Wesley, notwithstanding his evident admiration for him, hardly give a true view of his theology, for Wesley was pre-eminently Pauline in those very practical and moral questions which Matthew Arnold emphasizes. But it must be admitted that Puritan Paulinism, whether Calvinist or Methodist, did, after a time, effectively bury Paul under ponderous volumes of dreary and irrelevant discussions of his secondary notions and chance metaphors. 'It was a machinery of covenants, conditions, bargains, and party contracts such as would have proceeded from no one but the born Anglo-Saxon man of business, British or American.' While much of what Matthew Arnold says applies equally well to mediaeval Scholasticism, there is some truth in the criticism of the following words: 'What in St. Paul is secondary and subordinate, Puritanism has made primary; what in

St. Paul is figure, and belongs to the sphere of feeling, Puritanism has transported into the sphere of intellect and made thesis and formula. On the other hand, what is, with St. Paul, primary, Puritanism has treated as subordinate; and what is with him thesis, and belonging (so far as anything in religion can be said thus to belong) to the sphere of intellect, Puritanism has made image and figure.¹

But there are three qualifications to make to our appreciation of Arnold's brilliant essay. The first is that he eliminates from experience all mystical elements, and ignores them as being matter on which science can come to no conclusion, and thus anticipates much modern naturalistic writing. From the point of view of modern psychology his method belongs to a pre-scientific age. The modern psychologist might, and in many ways does, regard Paul's 'mystic' experiences as data to be explained away, but he would not regard it as data to be ignored. He would admit that he was dealing with mental facts which had an enormous influence on Paul, where Arnold ignores the facts altogether. In other words, our criticism of Matthew Arnold's appeal to Paul's experience is that it is an appeal only to his human experience, which is common *qua* experience with that of any other man, and not to that distinctive personal experience of God in Christ which was psychologically as well as religiously the determining fact in his life-work.² We gladly take the course indicated by Arnold when he says 'experience,' but we travel much farther in the road he pointed out when we say that the repudiation of what Paul considered its principal factor—namely, his vital and illuminating personal communion, not with a 'stream of tendency,' but with the living Christ—seriously damages some of Matthew Arnold's conclusions.

Another limitation of Matthew Arnold's writing was his

¹ M. Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 12, Popular Ed., 1892.

² This criticism is not invalidated by the fact that many of Matthew Arnold's references to Paul's love for Christ logically demand the mystical view, which he repudiates as outside the range of science.

constitutional inability to understand the spiritual tortures through which deeply religious souls—Paul, Augustine, Luther, Bunyan—passed when confronted with their incapacity to keep the Law of God. If only Matthew Arnold had combined with his critical genius the religion of the Bedford tinker, what a book he might have written! But the secular narrowness of a man who thinks merely in the terms of culture and conduct necessarily blinds him to the meaning of much written by one who thinks in the terms of eternity and infinity. Arnold had too much of the temperament of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, and knew too little of the burden of a laden conscience, effectively to fathom the lowest depths of so volcanic a personality as Paul. Another serious limitation was a failure to see the great truth, which underlay the Puritan theology expressed in Milton's poem, that Paul was trying 'to justify the ways of God to men'—that God was not only a justifier, but Himself just.

The work of Matthew Arnold is still of great value. The Paulinism which he attacked is dead, or *in articulo mortis*. His literary criticism of the Romans is substantially that of the best modern commentators. Sanday and Headlam, in their commentary, adopted them, and shall we say canonized what were previously by many people regarded as heresies. Many of Arnold's dicta on the Pauline literature seem likely to endure. It is not only his genius which makes his book so illuminating, but what we may call a certain glorious illogicality. Notwithstanding his rejection of mysticism as unscientific, he assumed the motive-force in St. Paul's life to be his passionate love of Christ. Now, this implies that to Paul's consciousness there was a living Christ, a person to love—very different from 'that stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being,' which is Matthew Arnold's definition of God as scientifically conceived and expressed.

Matthew Arnold's rough analysis of the literary structure

of the Epistle to the Romans is admirable. With a slight but quite necessary modification it is accepted by Sanday and Headlam, and could be generally accepted. What is important for our purpose is its realization of the primary value of experience. Matthew Arnold, apologizing for the pedantry of the method, sets down this analysis of the first eleven chapters of the Epistle :

‘ The first, second, and third are, in a scale of importance fixed by a scientific criticism of Paul’s line of thought, sub-primary ; the fourth and fifth are secondary ; the sixth and eighth are primary ; the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters are secondary. Furthermore, to the contents of the separate chapters themselves this scale must be carried on, so far as to mark that of the two great primary chapters, the sixth and the eighth ; the eighth is primary only to the end of the twenty-eighth verse ; but from thence to the end it is, however eloquent, yet, for the purpose of scientific criticism of Paul’s essential theology, only secondary.’

The point to be noted about this analysis is that Rom. vi. and viii. are the principal experimental chapters of the Epistle, and experience is the essence of the distinctive theology of Paul. Whether Rom. viii. needs division into primary and secondary is perhaps questionable. The last verses are really an outworking of the content of Paul’s experience of the love of God in Christ. Matthew Arnold would possibly not regard this as valid experience, but that arises from a narrow definition of what is scientific. Be that as it may, these two chapters, which deal with a new righteousness created by union with Christ, are the direct expression of Paul’s own experience of God.

Sanday and Headlam accept Arnold’s analysis, with a few additions, but they regard the material from a slightly different standpoint. Arnold classifies the passages with a view to their relative importance—if such a description of his teaching is permissible—in Paul’s theological system. Sanday and Headlam are thinking rather of the literary

construction of the book on which they are commenting, and therefore add other words of Paul to the passages he thinks primary. This is their statement : ' Matthew Arnold is limited by the method which he applies—and which others would no doubt join with him in applying—to the subjective side of Christianity, the emotions and efforts which it generates in Christians. But there is a further question how and why they came to be generated. . . . We therefore do not feel at liberty to treat as anything less than primary that which was certainly primary to Paul. We entirely accept the view that chaps. vi. and viii. are primary, but we also feel bound to place by their side the culminating verses of chap. iii. The really fundamental passages we should say were chap. i. 16, 17, which states the problem, and iii. 21-6, vi. 1-14, viii. 1-30 (rather than 1-28), which supply its solution.'

Now, exclusively from the point of view of the structure of the Epistle, Sanday and Headlam's fundamental passages must be accepted. If the Epistle is to be regarded as in any sense a thesis, its theorem must be stated, and the statement of it unquestionably is (i. 16, 17) : ' I am not ashamed of the gospel ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith ; as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.'

Paul's problem is, say Sanday and Headlam, ' How is man to become righteous in the sight of God ? ' but this does not state it fully enough. Paul's problem is, ' How is a man to become righteous in the sight of God, and yet God to remain righteous ? ' And the most succinct statement of his doctrine in all his writings is in the words, ' But now apart from the Law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe ; for there is no distinction ; for

¹ Rom. i. 16, 17.

all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God ; for the showing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season ; that He might Himself be just and justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.'¹

The sixth and eighth chapters discuss the experimental methods by which the righteousness of faith is to be achieved, and appeal to the experience which demonstrates that it can be received.

But, apart altogether from opinions on a particular document, Matthew Arnold is right in emphasizing that the primary fact for a scientific discussion of Paul's theology is the experience to which he appeals as the primary data for his conclusions. Arnold only becomes misleading when he rejects the spiritual content of Paul's experience as not data for scientific inquiry, and less misleading even then than he might at first sight appear to be, because, more often than not, he subconsciously assumes it. It was a failure to recognize the significance of the content of this experience which caused him to treat so lightly Paul's ethical problem as to the righteousness of God.

Matthew Arnold's summary of Rom. i.-xi. is so terse and illuminating that it may be well to set it down. 'The first chapter,' he writes, 'is to the Gentiles. Its purport is, You have not righteousness. The second is to the Jews ; and its purport is, No more have you, though you think you have. The third chapter, Faith in Christ as the one source of righteousness for all men. The fourth chapter gives to the notion of righteousness through faith the sanction of the Old Testament and of the history of Abraham. The fifth insists on the causes for exultation in the boon of righteousness through faith in Christ, and applies illustratively with this

¹ Rom. iii. 21-6.

design, the history of Adam. The sixth chapter comes to the all-important question, What is that faith in Christ which I, Paul, preach? and answers it. The seventh illustrates and explains the answer. But the eighth, down to the end of the twenty-eighth verse, develops and completes the answer. The rest of the eighth chapter expresses the sense of safety and gratitude which the solution is fitted to inspire. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters uphold the second chapter's thesis—so hard to a Jew, so easy to us—that righteousness is not by the Jewish Law, but dwells with hope and joy as a final result of things which is to be favourable to Israel.'

There are three criticisms necessary of this account of the Epistle. The first is that the substance of chap. iii. should be put more objectively, the announcement being not merely faith in Christ as a source of righteousness, but Christ crucified as the object of faith and the objective evidence that God is Himself just when a justifier of those who believe in Him. If the Puritans are to blame for over-stating this doctrine, Arnold's evasion of it almost as if it did not exist is even more culpable. And chap. vii. adds to the purport of chaps. i. and ii., that Gentiles and Jews are not righteous, the experimental conclusion, after careful psychological analysis, that he, Paul, himself was not righteous. The third omission is more general. Matthew Arnold does not mention the fact that the Epistle, particularly chaps. iv., vi., and vii., are answers to Jewish cavillers who fear that the issue of Paul's doctrine may be immorality.

Now, this question of the Jewish quibbles has more significance for an understanding of the literary structure of the Epistle than is always seen. Baur, treating it from an historical point of view, thought that chaps. ix.–xi. were the essential part of the Epistle, to which the rest was an introduction. 'St. Paul there grapples at close quarters with the objection that, if his doctrine held good, the special choice of Israel—its privileges and the promises made to it—all fell to the ground.' This doctrine, though Baur himself fell back

from it, has had modern supporters. It has even been thought by some that the Roman Church was a Jewish Christian community. It is impossible to maintain that view, because there are direct words spoken to the Gentiles, and the evidence that, though the Church may have been mixed, the Gentile spirit was predominant seems conclusive. The Gentile element gives the Church its colour. This inference cannot easily be explained away from the passages Rom. i. 5-7, 13-15, xv. 14-16. But, notwithstanding all this, it is impossible to read the Epistle—not only chaps. ix.-xi., but the very natural Jewish objections on ethical grounds to Paul's preaching of a new righteousness in place of the Torah—without realizing that Jews as well as Gentiles were very much in his mind.

May it be suggested that, though Paul was writing to a predominantly Gentile Church, his very Jewish complex was always suggesting Jewish questions. His letter was a manifesto to the Gentile Church at the centre of the Gentile world, quite possibly an encyclical letter, in which he stated his gospel of the new method of righteousness through the death of the risen Saviour, and by faith in Him.¹ He appealed to the experience of Christian men to corroborate his own as the primary evidence of the power of this faith to transform their lives.² But when he was writing he was always subconsciously aware of the Jewish sensitiveness to the Antinomian dangers of this new teaching, and answered objections that arose from it, sometimes permitting his answers to disturb the course of his argument.

The Jewish question obtrudes itself as he writes down the substance of his universal gospel. And in chaps. ix.-xi. he settles down to tackle it bodily, for he realizes that his universal gospel does undermine the treasured belief of the Jews in their privileged position as the chosen people. Readers of *The Ring and the Book* will remember Browning's description of Hyacinthus de Archangelis preparing his brief, but

¹ Rom. i. 15, 16; iii. 21-8.

² See Rom vi. 1-12.

remembering now and then his coming dinner. One can almost sniff the 'lamb's fry' of which he thinks while he laboriously prepares his Latin thesis! Perhaps the illustration is rather far fetched, but Paul's Jewish subconsciousness is never absent from him. He sets down the statement of his gospel for the world, but the fact that the Jews would not receive it hurt him, not only because of the tragic fact of their rejection, but because as a Jew himself he could not put away pride in his ancestry and his inheritance, and he was not without subconscious sympathies, although suppressed, with Jewish national and ethical objections. Paul, at least subconsciously, wanted to put a case which Judaism might heed.

The method of one's study of the Epistle to the Romans depends on the standpoint from which it is viewed, whether it be the exegetical, historical, critical, or some other standpoint. It is regarded here from the psychological experimental point of view, which was, with such qualifications as have been made above, that of Matthew Arnold, so that the arrangement of the material is of little importance. Paul was not, in the Western sense, a logical writer; by that is not meant he was illogical, but that he was alogical in the arrangement of his material. He was really always a missionary writer, and his fundamental religious experience and enthusiasm sometimes caused him to introduce matter irrelevant to his theme, though not irrelevant to his life-mission. In this letter he apparently spent unnecessary time in dealing with slight questions or criticisms, and his illustration—as, for instance, that of Adam—does not add much that is substantial to his main argument.

It is difficult to show that there is more than a slight logical sequence between one section and another in this letter, and in point of fact the sequence is only of secondary importance. The material will be dealt with from the point of view of his spiritual history, which, if not his point of view at the moment when he actually penned this letter,

must have moulded his thinking. Hence in this letter the experimental material is regarded as chronologically and logically of primary importance, and it is suggested that if Rom. i. 15, 16 and Rom. iii. 21-6 are considered as propositions to be proved, the best way to reach true conclusions is to examine first the religious experience of passages like Rom. vi. and viii., in order to understand how Paul, through many years of struggle, thought, and tears, but above all by means of his realized union with Christ, came to the conclusions which he could condense into the more or less dogmatic formulas of Rom. iii. (21-6). Not that Paul's doctrines were simply explanations of his experience; but his experience of God in Christ, with its resultant elevation of spirit and character, was the vital factor in all his thought. It would have been impossible for him to formulate the doctrine which he promulgated without it. A careful study of his spiritual history will show how, beginning with his experience of God as the inner core of all his testimony, his doctrines gradually arose. His prayer for the supernatural enlightenment of his understanding was answered because he lived in union with Jesus and learnt increasingly the power of His resurrection.

It is proposed, therefore, to work from the inner core of experience to the outer rind of doctrine. But before attacking the question of the doctrines rising out of his evangelical experience it is necessary to face the spiritual precondition of his thinking, and to analyse the ethical problem which was in the background of his doctrine—that is, the question of the Law, and disobedience of men to the Law, whether the Jewish Torah, or the law of those who were 'a law unto themselves,' or the law reflected in the 'inner man' of Paul, of which he gives us so clear an account in Rom. vii. The main passages for this object are those classified as sub-primary—Rom. i., ii., and vii., and also the questions and answers in other chapters which arise from his Jewish subconsciousness, with its demands for morality.

XI

PAUL'S ETHICAL PROBLEM

ST. PAUL'S evangelical doctrines are his solution of the ethical problem which necessarily arose in his mind through the logical inconsistency between his joyous experience of God's love in Christ on the one hand and his inherited beliefs in the sanctity of the Jewish Law, and the righteousness of the Lawgiver, who was also the awful Judge who would administer it, on the other. Paul was compelled to explain to himself how it was that his heart cried, 'No condemnation,' when, in point of fact, the Law, which was God's Law, considered by itself, condemned him still. Hence nothing is more important in our consideration of his doctrine than an examination of the state of mind in which the ethical problem arose, which, as a rational man, Paul could not burk, but was compelled to solve. Doctrine is, after all, the rational statement of truth, and to Paul, believing as he did in the government of men by a just God, rational and ethical meant the same thing. He knew nothing of, and could have cared nothing for, attempts to give a rational account of the universe except upon the ethical presupposition of its moral government.

When Paul set forth both the subjective and objective elements of the new righteousness, he declared emphatically that his teaching was not only that God is a justifier of them who believe, but also that He is just in being such a justifier. God's justice was of as much concern to Paul as man's justification. 'Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.'¹ Paul cared about both the righteousness of men

¹ Rom. ix. 14.

and the righteousness of God, and his opinion is that no 'new righteousness' he could preach can be acceptable to the conscience unless it justifies the ways of God to man. 'Yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar.'¹

Now, let us state the ethical dilemma which Paul's experience of pardoning love and liberation of spirit created for him. He felt himself unworthy of so great love—he is the chief of sinners—and yet he has experienced pardon. He had tried to keep the Law and failed miserably. The Pharisees found him blameless, but his own experience taught him that he was a wretched man, laden with a body of death. He deserved no reward. The only wages that he could claim were the wages of sin, but in point of fact he had received the gift—the undeserved free gift of God's eternal life. But what about the Law, under the edicts of which he had no claims whatever? He affirmed that it was holy and just and good. God had suddenly come into his life in Christ and set him free from his entanglements, and he was now able to do righteousness; but even so, as he afterwards wrote, he still fell short of his ideals. He strove to apprehend that for which he was apprehended—'not as though I have already apprehended'; the goal was still ahead. But how changed his feeling was. Once his inability to achieve his ideal had made him cry out, 'Who shall deliver me?' but when he wrote to the Philippians he could regard his past failures with sufficient equanimity to forget them, and could concentrate his energies so as to resolve to do one thing only: to strive after the ideal—to reach the goal—of the likeness of Christ. But did he fulfil the Law particularly as it had been interpreted by the Sermon on the Mount? Later in life the problem was solved for him, but when he first saw the apparent inconsistency between his conduct and his experience, and realized how little he deserved the divine favour in which he walked, he was confronted with the ethical problem as to whether God

¹ Rom. iii. 4.

Himself was justified in dealing so generously with a man whom the Law, and his conscience confirming it, condemned as undeserving. 'The wages of sin is death.'

The problem can be illustrated by a familiar story of Jesus, as well as by the ethical protests of modern secular moralists which find an echo in the conscience of us all. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the elder brother, when he heard of the father's reception of his wayward son, asked in substance the question, Is it fair? We shall have much to write about this parable later, and will deal here only with the surface illustration it gives of Paul's problem. That question has been echoed by thousands of people ever since. But what is important to realize is that it was also echoed by the returning brother. Such welcome from his father never occurred to him as possible. He had definitely repudiated as lost for ever his filial relationships to his father, and he returned, not to a father, but to a good employer of labour from whom he hoped to receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, instead of the meagre fare provided for him in the far country. There can be no doubt that the brothers, if they had conversed on the subject, would have agreed in saying, This treatment does not seem fair. And Paul, speaking from the welcomed prodigal's standpoint, feels that such treatment as he has received from God raises an acute problem, notwithstanding the joy and liberation of his experience, as to the justice of God. Is it fair? Moreover, this problem has occurred repeatedly to critics of evangelical Christianity, from Celsus to Cotter Morison and since. On the basis of the normal secular morality on which we treat each other in practical life, it is impossible to evade the fact that the evangelical experience and its claims are not at first sight to be harmonized with justice as administered by human law, even when it is law to which the conscience gives its assent. Here, then, is the ethical problem of Paul. The Epistle to the Romans was written, not only to declare the facts of the new righteousness, but to show that a pardoning

God is a just God. Paul's standpoint for considering the problem was his own experience. That experience he knew was as truly from God as the Torah ; and the Law, with its condemnations, must ultimately be harmonized with the heart and its triumphant joys. But the fact remains that men who consider the problem of the evangelical claim, and whose outlook is purely secular, do quite frankly say that those claims are unjust. Mr. Cotter Morison for this reason had no hesitation in saying that the Archbishop of Canterbury of his day and Mr. Spurgeon were immoral teachers, and that even Jesus, if He forgave a dying thief, acted immorally. There was nothing more emphasized by Celsus in his criticism of Christians than the fact that they welcomed disreputable people who wished to join their communities, whereas decent pagans attracted the good. But what could Paul do? He realized clearly enough, if I may so say, the illegality of his experience, but, if both experience and Law come from the same divine hand, he saw that they could not be morally inconsistent with one another.

Now, in our own days Paul's theories of the Atonement—or his alleged theories—are often criticized as unethical. All sorts of ingenuity is exercised even by Christian theologians in trying to make them conform to modern ethical standards. This is often due either to a misunderstanding of what Paul said or to a failure to realize the law of relativity. Whether or no Paul was successful, he was the pioneer in ethical treatment of the experiences of salvation, and his doctrines were his solution of the ethical problem which his experience raised. So far from thinking of him as the preacher of unethical evangelical doctrines, men should realize that he was really the first preacher of an ethical evangelism ; that he stood supremely for a proclamation of righteousness, both man's and God's—God is Himself just and yet the justifier of sinners who believe.

LAW AND JUDGEMENT

The Jews, and more especially the Pharisees, were educated in the love of the Law. The longest Jewish hymn—Psalm cxix.—is a glorification of the Law. Paul says the Law is just and holy and good, and his inability to obey it tortured him. Even Jesus says that not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away. 'I came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.' And yet there are other sayings of Paul which seem contradictory to this view. 'The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Victory over what? Over death, over sin, *and over the Law*. But if the Law is holy, good, and desirable, why must it be overcome? And why does Paul speak of it sometimes almost as though he hated it?

What then does he mean by the Law? He uses the word ambiguously, and with different significance in different places. Sometimes the word covers the whole Jewish economy as contrasted with that of Christianity in comparisons between Law and grace, and is used in a way analogous to that in which the terms 'circumcision' and 'uncircumcision' are used as general descriptive titles of Jews and Gentiles.

The Scriptures were divided into the Law and the Prophets, and under the term Law were included the historical books. Sometimes the term Law includes ceremonial, ritual, and even what may be called 'taboo.' In the Epistle to the Galatians the ritual side of the Law was particularly in Paul's mind, as it must have been in that of his readers; but, generally, the Law in the Epistle to the Romans may be identified with its moral enactments, and be considered as that body of commandments which any enlightened conscience would realize was right. The fact that the Gentiles were blamed for their wrong-doing, though they lacked the revelation of the Jewish Torah, and

commended for their right-doing when they did right because they had a moral equivalent in their own consciences and were a law unto themselves, indicates that Paul was thinking of the moral rather than the ceremonial Law when he wrote this letter. The statement that a man guilty on one point of the Law is guilty of all may refer to a ceremonial as well as to a moral point.¹ But we shall not err greatly if we assume that the Law in the Epistle to the Romans was what we call the moral law.

The distinction which Jesus made between the weightier matters of the Law (mercy and judgement) and the lesser (tithing of mint, anise, and cummin) was valid, and is what is meant by the distinction between the moral and ceremonial Law. It is quite evident that much in the Jewish Law soon became a matter of indifference to Paul. He lived in this respect as the Gentiles did, and was not much influenced by Jewish taboo, although he regarded it as a matter so much indifferent that he was quite willing to practise it at the request of the brethren in Jerusalem, on his last visit there, for the sake of peace and quietness. The circumcision of Timothy is perhaps another instance. Paul's missionary policy must not be forgotten. 'Being free from all, I made myself slave to all, that I might gain the more. And I became to the Jews as a Jew that I might gain Jews ; to those under the Law as under Law, not being myself under Law, that I might gain those under Law ; to those without Law [i.e. Gentiles] as without Law, not being without Law to God, but under Law to Christ, that I might gain those without Law.'² Law in such a passage is, no doubt, ceremonial and ritual, and the fact of its observance or non-observance as a pure matter of expediency demonstrates Paul's indifference to the lesser side of Law.

But Law in the Epistle to the Romans is rarely, if ever, thought of on its ritual side. The references to it are to its moral enactments. For instance, 'I had never known

¹ James ii. 10.

² 1 Cor. ix. 19-22.

coveting unless the Law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet,' is typical of the quotations he makes from the Law, and he tends to equate the term Law with its moral content. Indeed, the words 'for circumcision indeed profits if thou be a doer of the Law'¹ would seem definitely to suggest a division of the moral from the ritual Law. When he claims that 'the ordinance of the Law might be fulfilled,'² he certainly is thinking only of the moral law. In Rom. vii., where he speaks of a law warring in his members, many scholars affirm that he is using the term in much the way in which we speak of a scientific law—'I find therefore this regularly recurring phenomenon.' But this hardly seems satisfactory. 'Law' in modern science belongs to another intellectual world than Paul's, although the varieties of his uses of the term must not be forgotten, nor the way in which the seer catches meanings hidden from the sage; but perhaps in this particular passage it would be truer to say, especially considering its context, that in the words 'When I would do good, evil is present with me,' there is a subjective reflection of the Torah.

Paul's general attitude towards the Law, in the Epistles to the Galatians and Romans, is that there is no salvation in obeying it, not because there might not be if it could be obeyed, but because in point of fact it is impossible to obey.³ 'If there had been a law given that could make alive, verily righteousness would have been by the Law.'⁴ The Law, while it tells man what to do, is without a dynamic. Paul's feeling about the Law is a mixed one of thankfulness for its revelation and regret of its inoperativeness. The moral law continues even when it is superseded by the gospel, for Christ actually came that the ordinance of the Law might be fulfilled,⁵ but not after the external methods of the age of the dominance of the Law—not after the flesh, but after the spirit. The Law was in some sense

¹ Rom. ii. 25.² Rom. viii. 4.³ Gal. iii. 10, v. 3;⁴ Gal. iii. 21.⁵ Rom. viii. 4.

the instrument of sin, 'the strength of sin,' in that it made men aware of sin who sinned without blame apart from it. 'Sin was not imputed to them.' 'I was alive once, but when the Law came I died.' This Paul does not regret; he 'delights in the Law of God after the inward man.' His great struggle was to keep it, but with all his struggles he was baffled, broken, defeated, and driven to despair. 'We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal sold unto sin. For that which I do I know not; for not what I would that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not that I do, I consent unto the Law that it is good: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?' This is experience—bitter, poignant experience; there is no way out of captivity, even to the most zealous searcher after righteousness, by means of the Law.

But what matters for Paul's ethical problem as much as the Law is the Lawgiver, who also is the righteous Judge of all the earth. What Paul finds within his heart of sin and bitter judgement, he finds without in the world also. He finds equally amongst Jews, with their boasted privileges, and Gentiles, that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'¹ And he also finds that God has already judged, and will judge again. The Gentiles have been judged—yes, judged, even in Rome, the seat of imperial magnificence; judged by the debasement that has fallen on her sons, and the degeneracy which he, like other moralists of his age, saw. 'God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured amongst themselves. God gave them up unto vile passions—men with men working uncleanness and receiving in themselves the true recompense of their error which was due. And, even as they refused to have

¹ Rom. iii. 23.

God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind.' Those words describe an actual judgement of God more terrible than any lurid hell of the apocalyptic imagination. And as to the Jews, the tragedy of their rejection by God is one of the most heart-rending passages in literature.

But, more than that, this God of righteousness will continue to judge. 'And reckonest thou, O man,' he writes, 'who judgest them that practise these things, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?' And the Jew—will his circumcision, his Judaism, profit him if he transgresses the Law? If non-circumcision characterizes the Gentile and puts him outside the covenant, immorality neutralizes circumcision. 'If thou be a transgressor of the Law, thy circumcision is uncircumcision.' That is to say that all Jews who do wrong are really Gentiles and publicans, and their boasted privileges are non-operative; in a word, 'all have come short of the glory of God.' Bunyan's picture of Christian, terrified under Mount Sinai, after he had sought Mr. Legality at the village of Morality, 'who had a pretty young man to his son whose name was Civility,' may be deemed by some out of date, but it certainly expresses without any exaggeration St. Paul's feeling about the Law, and the hopelessness of keeping it, and the terrors of judgement reserved for breakers of it by a righteous God.

Paul was profoundly convinced of his own worthlessness; so far as he understood himself, he had done nothing to earn quietness of mind; not only had he not kept the Law but his course of action as a blasphemer and persecutor had made him even the chief of sinners; nevertheless this extraordinary thing happened to him—that a flood of light illuminated him; God revealed His Son in him; he lost all sense of condemnation; he became confident, free, and even exultingly joyous—a new creation. Why should such an experience come? Was the God of Justice justified in dealing so with him? Paul still believed in the awful

Law of God, and was even at a later date convinced that he was not already perfect, and yet he lived a joyful life in the assurance of God's favour, which he never doubted.

What was the explanation? Could the God of such a joyous experience be the God of those terrible and threatening judgements? Paul's first clear answer is that nothing in the Law can solve the problem. If it is to be solved, it must be outside the Law Court and not inside. He cannot hope for, and will not seek, justification there, for he knows, if he does, that he has no righteousness to plead which would be other than ludicrous in the light of God's glory. From this conclusion he proceeds, not, of course, consciously, by a process of rationalization, but intuitively, to form his doctrines by analysis of the content of his experience.

A careful reading of the sub-primary chapters (i., ii., and vii.) of the Epistle enables us to understand the point of view from which Paul formulated his doctrine of justification by faith. The new righteousness, he declares, is 'apart from the Law.' Paul has been much criticized for his juridical way of treating salvation. No criticism is less discerning. Paul's conception of salvation was not juridical, but anti-juridical. It is only because his Jewish complex was always reminding him of the Jews and their reverence for the Law that 'he became a Jew to the Jews,' and used the legal word justification. We shall see in the sequel how he always used, when he could, the language of those whom he strove to convince if he could make it partly convey the deep thoughts he found so difficult to communicate. But to argue that his use of the word justification implies that he thought juridically about salvation is quite to misunderstand Paul. Salvation as he saw it was 'apart from the Law.'

The opposite teaching that Paul was an Antinomian is much nearer to the truth, and indeed in some respects it is the truth. But, however much that is so, a new word is needed, because the name Antinomian has become the description of certain deluded hypocrites who presume upon God's grace

to do evil. That such immorality was possible as a result of Paul's teaching, the question and answers of Rom. v., vi., and vii. make plain. Paul was evidently concerned with the possible abuses of his teaching, and such abuses have unquestionably occurred, particularly in the modern spheres of Paul's influence. But Paul in certain aspects of his teaching is Antinomian, and it may be at once admitted that no more morally dangerous doctrines than his were ever penned. Paul's doctrines are only effective for men who enjoy religious experience. The intellectually and morally timid will always shrink from them. Paul's motto was not 'Safety First.' The man who climbs alpine heights is in danger of the crevasse. And the man who follows Paul has like dangers to keep in mind. Paul's theology is that of a despairing man. It is a desperate venture of the soul, and, because he saw nothing else to do, 'he throws himself on God and unperplexed, seeking shall find Him.' We deal with this matter later, and for the moment only assert that, while Paul's teaching is in some respects Antinomian, this description of it fails because it only expresses the negative side of a doctrine whose real value is in its positive content. Perhaps, even on the negative side, 'Extra-nomian' would describe it better than Antinomian (*apart* from the Law a righteousness is revealed), but a better term to express Paul's attitude both to the Law and his affirmation of a righteousness which supersedes it—to express his religion both from the negative and positive standpoints—would be 'Super-nomian.'

Paul's ethical conflict left deep marks on his soul, but it is sufficient to say, in stating the ethical dilemma of the disharmony between his feeling about the Law, which he could not obey, and his joyous experience, that he finds his solution, not in the Law, whose methods he definitely and finally rejects, but in examination of his new experiences of God in Christ.

XII

THE FAMILY SOLUTION OF PAUL'S ETHICAL PROBLEM

(JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH)

WHEN Matthew Arnold attacked the Puritan conception of Paulinism, he admitted that Puritanism and St. Paul met at one point. 'The miserable sense of sin from unrighteousness, the joyful intuition of a good conscience from righteousness—these are points at which Puritanism and Paul meet. They are facts of human nature, and can be verified.' Now, unfortunately, a scientific study of St. Paul's writings does not confirm the accuracy of this statement, or at least does not confirm it as a full statement of the facts. Paul had a good conscience, but not because he was righteous. On the other hand, it was just his failure to make himself righteous even when he enjoyed the benefits of a good conscience which caused him to seek an ethical justification of his experience. Matthew Arnold affirms and we agree that '*all*' in the words 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God' is the commanding word of Paul's chief epistle. Hence all, the apostle included, failed to be righteous. Paul, at the very time when he was conscious of failure, entered into a condition of soul in which he felt 'no condemnation,' in which, to correct Arnold's words, he had a good conscience, although convicted of unrighteousness. This is the fundamental difficulty of Paul's moral teaching, and it must necessarily have presented the ethical problem to Paul of which his theology is the solution. It is a very partial representation of Paul's teaching to account

for it, as Matthew Arnold does, by the argument that Paul, having failed to do righteousness, discovered, by means of his mystical devotion to Christ and identification with his death, a dynamic for right-doing, and that substantially he teaches nothing else. While this view of Matthew Arnold's is a perfectly fair and even illuminating statement of the moral practice of Paul (notwithstanding that it makes mystical assumptions which, if followed to their logical issues, Matthew Arnold, to be consistent with his own statements, must have rejected), it is really a superficial account of the thought of Paul. Arnold fails entirely to cope with Paul's own statement that his gospel is a doctrine, not only of man's righteousness in Christ, but of God's righteousness. When Arnold refers to the 'righteousness of God,' he uses the term subjectively, as if it only meant 'conforming to the moral order.' But Paul declares that God Himself must be shown to be just when He justifies.

An interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans which ignores the fact that its author is as much concerned to prove that God is just as that He is the justifier of men, ignores what is obviously fundamental in its teaching. The problem for Paul's thought is the problem arising out of the ethical contradiction of the good and happy conscience of a man who had done no sufficient righteousness to deserve such an experience. But Matthew Arnold is really a guide when he says that the scientific way is to examine experience, and it is by means of the examination of Paul's experiences that we can find a solution of his ethical problem, as we believe he did, in his fundamental doctrine (Matthew Arnold notwithstanding) of justification by faith. But, then, this can only be done by an examination of more of his religious experiences than the bits Matthew Arnold collects. When Matthew Arnold wrote about the inner life of Paul, he analysed certain ethical experiences in a most illuminating manner, and showed what were their mystical roots, but

he rejected Paul's conversion as outside the scope of science, put no valuation on what is deducible from such an experience, gave no attention to the psychological events of Paul's earlier history, and failed to realize that, important as his ethical experience was, it was only a part of the content of his inner life. Matthew Arnold was more interested in Paul's practice than his thought, but an appeal to experience can ignore neither thought nor emotion. A more penetrating examination of both might have shown him that the Puritans, notwithstanding their unfortunate theologoumena and lifeless formulas, which buried Paul under 'Paulinism,' did show a perfectly true understanding of Paul in asserting that his purpose was 'to justify the ways of God to man.'

This chapter will examine the experience of Paul, in chapters vi. and viii. of this Epistle to which Matthew Arnold appealed, and which he rightly called primary. But we must pay attention, not only to their ethical, but also their emotional content, to see whether we can find guidance by means of it towards an understanding of Paul's solution of his ethical problem. We shall give, without neglecting the ethical experiences, special attention to those emotional and mystical experiences which Matthew Arnold ignores, but without discussing their conceptual content of the experience of God in Christ with which other sections of this volume deal.

Nothing is more striking than the joyous emotional tone of such passages of Scripture as Rom. vi. and viii., and v. (1-10). The last passage has so much of experience in it that perhaps it might, if experience be regarded as of primary importance, be classified from that point of view as of primary value. Perhaps Arnold did not so classify it because the experience it expresses is emotional and mystical in tone rather than ethical. The sense of liberation, joy, confidence, love given and love received, bursting into far-reaching but well-grounded hopes, gives a tone of holy gladness to these words

which is in itself an exhilaration. Chap. v. begins with an appeal to men who have left the Law Court to have peace, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Such a hope is well grounded; it will not be disappointed and put its subjects to shame; how can it, 'since the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given us'? That is experience. And then the facts of Christianity—of Christ's death and His reconciling ministry—are named, which cause us to 'rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation'—experience again. Then chap. vi., with its recital of the facts of identification with Christ in His death and resurrection by dying to the world, and the sense of what might happen through His resurrection power, enables Paul to claim confidently for his readers that 'Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.' The exhortations of this chapter could not have been made effectively except as the outcome of experiences such as Paul's own: 'I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

But it is in Rom. viii., full though it is of Paul's deeper thought, that we most of all feel the tone of triumphal joy. One perhaps may find a figure buried in its words, or, at any rate suggested by them, which expresses its triumphant gladness of tone. It is, as it were, the description of the triumphal march of a liberated man who has come out of the law courts and the prison, out of the outward life of the flesh, and is making his way to his Father's house. It is the march of a liberated soul, in company with his liberator, from a prison to his home.

'There is therefore now no condemnation,' says the Apostle. 'The law court is behind us, and the prison escaped.' 'No condemnation.' We are like men whom the verdict 'Not guilty' has liberated from fear and misery—we are in as good a position as they, although the law courts

would never have given us that verdict. We have broken prison, and need enter it no more. We have been set free, as prisoners are set free at a Coronation. The great Deliverer has liberated us ; we are in Christ—that is, in communion with Him. ‘ There is therefore no condemnation.’ We are united with Jesus Christ, and are free for ever from the law of sin and death.

‘ Let us march on, we who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.’ In our joyous march we can afford to think on these old bad days when the Deliverer Himself came to us in prison, and condemned the ancient prison to destruction that He might deliver us—so that the good things for which the law court, with all its darkness, stood might be done by us. Christ has altered our very mind ; He has given us new affections. No more bitter struggles that can only end in death and ruin for us ! But a new life of peace and happiness in which we can thrive and grow ! Let us march on in the fresh air, where the winds of the Spirit blow ! No longer closed in or shut up, but free men, walking in Christ Jesus, who, invisible to our eyes, is the very quickening spirit of our renewed minds and hearts. What prospects there are in such life and liberty ! Even our mortal bodies shall be quickened, and live. Let us march on, led by the Spirit, our life and companion, for when led by the Spirit of God we are His sons—not slaves or prisoners, but sons—and so let us come to His home ! Let us stop at His house. It is the house of the very judge whom we feared so much. In the law court we were frightened, but let us go inside, for we have heard that this judge is our Father, so we who have received the adoption may go in without fear. How different is this house from the law court ! How we misunderstood our judge when we forgot He was not only a judge ! What is the Spirit of His Son in our hearts crying ? And what shall we cry in unison with Him ? ‘ Abba, Father ! ’ Yes, we are His children, and common children with our great Deliverer of one Father. We thought He was only a judge, but now

we know, as we come to Him in His Son, that He is our Father as He is His. 'No condemnation.' The law court is so far left behind, that we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The judge's home is reached, and we are His welcomed children.¹

Is there not ground for thinking that a new *Pilgrim's Progress* could be found in those verses? Our allegory, of course, like all allegories, fails at points, but does it not suggest something of the tone of marching triumph of men who walk in Christ Jesus, and something of the tremendous fact that when Paul left the law court he found the home? When he could get no hope from such a judge, as the Law and his own conscience pictured Him, he found a new life by realizing that, however truly God was a judge, He was also a Father, and found it through the deliverance wrought for him by Jesus Christ His Son, whose Spirit dwelling in him made him realize that he was of one fraternity with Christ in common heirship of the heavenly Father. And then his mind shoots off to dwell on the inconsistency between such a heritage and all his present sufferings, only to realize that Jesus suffered too, and the pains of the moment were nothing in comparison with what the full realization of Sonship must mean in the days to come. Furthermore, experience illuminated him, for even during his earthly struggle the Spirit of Christ in Him was always helping his weaknesses, linking him to God's throne, and strengthening him by his deep intimacy with God. And then there is given to Him a far-reaching vision of spiritual activities stretching into dim eternities, and assuring him, who is a co-heir of Christ, of an everlasting love that thought out life for him before he had a being, so that on earth when a sinner he heard a voice calling him—for did not Jesus come to call, not the righteous, but sinners?—and when he said, 'Deliver me!' treated him, a man bound in sin, as if he were not bound in sin; treated him, unrighteous as he was, as if he were just, and by His power was already making him to share His glory; in sharing

¹ Rom: viii. 1-17.

His companionship he was being changed from glory to glory into the image of the Lord ; he was being glorified as from the Lord, the Spirit. And then he goes on to think of what all this must mean for himself and the men to whom he writes. What such a love actually experienced implies not only in a long-distant past, but for the future. ' All things work together for good to them who love God,'¹ for God loves them. What are his conclusions ? ' What shall we say to these things ? What is the logic of it all ? God is certainly on the side of His own children. That is evident in the gift of His Son. Such a gift implies all other gifts.* People may still point out that he, an unrighteous man, does not deserve such love, but what of that if God counts him just ? Leave it to God ; it is His business ! And, after all, who has a right to condemn ? None, except one. And does He condemn ? No. He came into the world to save ! Condemn ? No ! He did not do that, although He might have done ; but instead He died, rose again, ascended to God's right hand, and intercedes—but condemn ? No ! And who can separate me from the love of Christ ? Here surely we come to experience—of love that had been shed abroad in his heart. Who that knew it could doubt its power ? It is the one unbreakable thing in the universe ; nothing celestial, terrestrial, infernal, imaginable, or unimaginable can separate a man from it. Nothing can break the grappling-irons of Christ's love whereby a soul is linked to Him. Do we call that hope ? It is more ; it is knowledge arising from an experience of so great love.

Now, this figurative sketch of those verses is made for the purpose of showing their emotional tone, not for the purpose of analysing the many ideas and doctrines of Paul's fruitful mind ; but also principally to show that the great fact of Paul's experiences was his filial realization of God's Fatherhood in Christ, and not only of the filial relation of his soul to God, and the paternal relation of God to his

¹ Rom. viii. 17-30.

² Rom. viii. 32.

soul, but also of the family relation implied in the fraternity of Jesus Christ. Paul himself, the Christians to whom he is united, Jesus Christ, *are all* brothers.¹ The family of God must never be ignored when we speak of the Fatherhood of God. 'The faith of Paul is, then, the union with God which is established in fellowship with Christ.* And Paul and other Christians were a fraternity in Christ, crying together, in common brotherhood with their co-heir, 'Abba, Father.' Paul left the law court; was snatched out of prison by a great deliverer: and as a free and happy man discovered the meaning of life in His Father's house, where he learnt increasingly the significance of His love.

Now we come to what we believe to be the key for solving Paul's ethical problem—namely, that his experience of God in Christ was a filial experience in the context of the family life. He had left the law court—he forgot the things that were behind. He found nothing but despair in his futile moral struggles. He found in Christ a deliverer. And in Christ, who was revealed in him as God's Son, he found the Father. What he discovered was the ethics of the family, and he was satisfied that they were higher than those of the law court. Indeed, what the Law commanded he could do as a son, although as a slave he had failed. But even if he failed as a son—and that he was conscious of failure, even when a Christian, is evident from Phil. iii. 13—he was not driven to despair, because he judged by the ethic of the family and not by that of the law court. His justification was by faith—by trust in a Father's heart. Of course, in a sense it was not justification. Justification is a term that belonged to the law court. But when Paul spoke to men under the Law, or in their hearing, he was compelled to use the language they understood. In a law court, justification means 'Not guilty,' or acquittal, and what he says is that, though it is perfectly true that neither I nor anybody else (whatever he do) can earn the verdict 'Not

¹ Rom. viii. 15, 16:

² Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 144:

guilty' from a just administrator of the Torah, I have entered into an experience in which I enjoy all the values of the verdict 'Not guilty,' and many more. My discovery was that the judge is not always in the law court, but has a home, and when I got to know His Son, who told me He was my brother, I went home with Him, and cried along with Him, 'Abba, Father.' Not only is there no condemnation to me who am in Jesus Christ, but a witness of the Spirit that I am the Father's child. Surely Paul might have written :

Why should the children of a 'judge'
Go mourning all their days?

Now, this may be called rank Antinomianism. In certain aspects it is, but, as we have said above, it is better called Super-nomianism, and, in point of fact, if it is an Antinomianism to be objected to, as it is evident from the Epistle to the Romans Jewish critics averred, it must be claimed that not only Paul, but Jesus, was an Antinomian. Why be afraid of the misleading nickname 'Antinomian'? Let us rather use the word we have coined, 'Super-nomian,' if we feel a need for this pseudo-scientific phraseology. It at least has the value of covering the facts, which 'Antinomian' has not; but, better still, let us realize that Christianity with God in it has revealed a much higher ethic than that of legislative and secular courts—the family ethic—and that the hope of the world, personal and social, lies in its adoption.

It is often argued that Paul rarely quoted Jesus. Wrede built up his theory that Paul's Christ was the Christ of the apocalyptic and not Jesus of Nazareth on that opinion. But it is generally admitted that the lack of verbal quotation of the words of Jesus proves very little, and, moreover, in some writers, particularly Wrede, the minimization goes to lengths with which few would agree. The truth is that verbal references to our Lord's teaching

are much more numerous in Paul's writings than is generally admitted. Nothing in Gresham Machen's brilliant work on the *Origin of St. Paul's Religion* is more important than his lucid demonstration of Paul's uses of our Lord's teaching. But what is of more moment than verbal quotation is the fact apparent to most unprejudiced minds that the writings of Paul are soaked with the Spirit of Jesus. This is not often disputed of Paul's moral teaching. The Epistle to the Romans (xii.-xiv.) gives us an excellent instance of the way in which Paul was evidently a practical disseminator of his Lord's moral maxims. Paul's dependence on Jesus in his more theological writings has not been so much emphasized, because it is forgotten that Paul wrote, not as Christ, but as a Christian; not as a giver, but as a receiver.

It is of primary importance to note the identity of the teaching of Jesus and Paul on the Fatherhood of God. The inconsistencies pointed out between our Lord's teachings on this subject and his apostles' are only such as can be found in the teachings of either. Jesus speaks of 'your father the Devil,' and Paul talks about 'children of wrath,' and both passages have been used, by persons who never can see the wood for the trees, to establish doctrines in which neither Jesus nor Paul believed. Paul's use of the word 'adoption' has been the chief stumbling-block, as if he put a limitation on God's Fatherhood, which Jesus never did. But this difference is literary and not religious, and Jesus was as much a greater master of literature than Paul as He was of everything else. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is so incomparably beautiful that its literary structure is sometimes confused with its heavenly meaning. Paul, like Jesus, believed in the universal Fatherhood of God, but neither Paul nor Jesus could regard that Fatherhood as other than an analogy of paternity, for in a literal sense no man has more than one father—the man who begot him. Whatever the paternal relation of God to man

means, it must be moral, as both Master and apostle show. Such a relation to God is potential in all men, but only becomes active when realized and practised. 'To as many as believed, to them gave He authority to become Sons of God.'¹ In this sense Paul's proclamation of the universal grace of God is the spiritual equivalent of what Jesus means by Fatherhood. Not all God's sons, even according to Jesus, say 'Father,' but all God's children are capable of saying 'Father' when the Spirit of His Son speaks in their hearts. There is no limitation to the potentiality of sonship for any human being in Paul's teaching, but the reality of sonship is only known by those who find the Father in the Son as taught by Jesus.² It was possible for Philip to be with Him and yet not know Him. Adoption is a metaphor used by Paul to emphasize the rights of heirship—legal as well as natural rights—which is in no sense inconsistent with genuine Fatherhood, the figure both of Jesus and Paul. It is an explicatory and additional metaphor.

But what is of value is to apprehend the joy and confidence of the filial relation realized by Paul and his readers. Nothing is more moving in his writings than the use of the word 'Abba, Father,' which confirms in the very dialect Jesus used of His own spiritual experience the experience of the Saviour. The use of this term both in Galatians and Romans is the climax of a description of the deep things of God. The tenderest name Paul uses for God—and it is his typical description of Him—is God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is a tremor in his voice when, greatly daring, he can stand, as it were, on the same platform with Jesus, his brother and co-heir, and use the very word he used, and say 'Abba.' He had come to Jesus, and Jesus had fulfilled His promise and revealed to him as none other could the Father. But that Paul and Jesus regarded God's Fatherhood in the same way, whatever is the significance of the added metaphor of adoption, is plain

¹ John i: 13:

² Matt. xi. 27.

from Gal. iv. 6 : ' And because ye *are* sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father ' —not to make you sons, ' but because ye are sons.'¹

Now, it is just in the fact of their common belief in the Fatherhood of God that Paul's theology was so profoundly influenced by Jesus, but it must never be forgotten that Paul's was the experience of the returning prodigal—of the wretched man who cried for mercy—and not that of Him who spoke to the world out of the bosom of the Father. This fundamental difference of standpoint is often overlooked by those who see contradictions between Paul's teaching and his Lord's. The point of view is, and must be, different if experience counts for anything. Not even in Rom. xii. is the teaching of Jesus more clearly discernible than in Rom. viii. Paul's mind was soaked in the teaching of Jesus, and that may have been either because of his spiritual communion with a really revealing Christ, or because he was familiar with his teaching, or for both reasons. How could a companion of Mark and Luke be other than familiar with it? Would it not be much more illuminating, in studying Paul, to assert that he was, rather than to make the very common assumption that he was not?

But why is the claim made so confidently that Paul's teaching is soaked with that of Jesus? For this reason : certain elements of it sometimes labelled Antinomian, are the very things most reminiscent of our Lord's theological teaching, and are really founded on the belief common to Jesus and Paul of the Fatherhood of God and the family ethic.

It would not be difficult to support this statement by a careful analysis of our Lord's teachings about forgiveness and love to the neighbour, but an examination of the two parables, the Husbandman in the Vineyard² and the Parable of the Prodigal Son, will be simpler and sufficient. Did Paul

¹ Gal. iv. 6.

² Matt. xx. 1-16 ; Luke xv. 11-32.

ever read the Parable of the Prodigal Son? No positive answer can be given to that question, but, if he did, some expressions in Rom. viii. could be tracked to it. This would be plainer if our Lord's story was described, not as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, but as that of the Father and His Family—which would be a truer description of it; and Rom. viii. is a study of a Father and two sons—Paul and the First-born of many brethren are the two sons. The significance of this suggestion is dealt with in the next chapter.¹ The first thing to note in a comparative study of the two Parables of the Husbandman in the Vineyard and the Prodigal Son is their startling similarities. There is a striking correspondence between the two groups of dramatis personæ. The master of the vineyard corresponds with the father; the men who had toiled through the heat and burden of the day with the elder brother; the man who did one hour's work with the prodigal. In each case there is grumbling—the whole-day toilers grumble because the same payment has been given 'unto this last' as to them, and the elder brother grumbles because the ne'er-do-well has the fatted calf killed for him, whereas he never had a kid. There is no difference at all in the *motif* of the stories, but exact correspondence. What difference there is is not very material, and belongs to the artistic unity of the stories. The employer rebukes his workmen for being envious, and claims that he has a right to do what he likes with his own—perhaps a natural touch in a study of an Oriental employer and his workmen; but the father pleads in a fatherly way with his discontented son, and suggests that to the Father's heart and the family spirit the return of a wanderer was a cause for joy. But the complaint in both cases is the same, 'It is *not fair*.'

But what must be noted is the different effect of these two stories on the minds of unsophisticated readers. Did any one ever read the story of the Husbandman

¹ p. 201.

in the Vineyard without complete sympathy with the men who worked so hard all day and only received the same reward as a man who, for all we know, may have been a loafer (people who go about saying 'No man hath hired us' in normal times usually are), who did a little work in the cool of the evening? And yet what simple and unsophisticated reader of the Parable of the Prodigal Son ever felt much sympathy for the elder brother? The naturalness of the welcome of the erring boy by a loving father, told with a beauty perhaps never equalled in any story, appeals to the heart of mankind, and the elder brother's claim for his rights jars on one's ears, and spoils the music and the dancing, mars the family feeling, and is inconsistent with the natural ethics of the greatest human institution—the family. And yet the case for complaint in each instance is precisely the same. Why do we sympathize with the critics in one story and not in the other? The reason, of course, is obvious. We all have two natural ethical standards, one for the labour yard, and one for the family, and what seems to us right in one seems wrong in the other.

Commentaries are full of attempts to moralize the action of the master of the vineyard. Ingenious theories are built up to show that the all-day workers really were lazy men, or that the loafer worked hard when he did get employment, and made up in quality what he lost in quantity, and so forth and so on, but these theories quite spoil the point of the story, which is, 'The last shall be first.' Similarly, there is nothing more common than the attempt to prove the godliness of the elder brother, often with a complete forgetfulness that as a member of a family he lacked in family feeling, in sympathy with his father's heart, in natural affection for his brother, and was the victim of narrow-mindedness and many other evil spirits. But, say his defenders, 'Oh, these things are just human nature!' as if it were not also human nature to waste one's living with harlots. In both cases these sophistications arise out of the

quite natural desire not to do anything to undermine the compulsion of normal morality. In both cases there is an incomplete apprehension of the higher ethic of Jesus and Paul, and a doubt as to whether the family ethics are really higher.

The story of the Husbandman in the Vineyard, considered from the standpoint of the labour market or the law court, cannot be defended. From that standpoint it was not fair to give a man who worked one hour the same wage as the man who worked twelve. The only way in which such action can be justified is by the ethic of Jesus, which is not the ethic of normal secular relationship but the ethic of the family. If the employer were a father and the workmen children, we should—so long as we read the story simply and without sophistication—feel quite differently, as, indeed, we do when we read the story of the Prodigal Son—when we see, that is, the facts in a family setting.

Now, it is not only true of our Lord's parables, but it is true of His actions, that His ethic was criticized by decent-minded moralists in His own day. Most respectably brought up people, if they look at facts squarely, know that, had they been in the house of Simon the Pharisee, they would have been shocked at a prophet who not only tolerated a woman from the streets, but permitted her to kiss his feet repeatedly. The criticism of Simon was the perfectly natural criticism of an ordinary moral man. Toleration of such actions would be a menace to the stability of the social order. The ethic of forgiveness and love, with their tremendous cleansing power, is not credited by many Christians even to-day. Perhaps most of us would be better described as Simonians than Christians.¹ Cotter Morison objected, as has been said, to the morality of Jesus because He forgave a dying thief. Again, if such action is to be considered merely from the point of view of the secular law, it is difficult to justify. The truth is that our Lord's

¹ Luke vii. 36-50.

teaching about the Fatherhood of God and the worth of a human soul raises us out of the morality of contracts and bargains into a different ethical world. It is a world in which sinners, despairing because of their failure to do right, do find God in Christ, and in their hearts a Spirit that cries out, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and say, Abba!'—and a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Such teachings and practices of Jesus as those to which we have referred—and they are only dramatic illustrations of His whole teaching—seem to demonstrate a higher doctrine than that of the law court. They confirm Paul's experience of his filial relationship to God in Christ, which made him cry, 'Abba, Father,' and filled him with the exultant love and confidence which inspired the great paean of praise to God's love with which Rom. viii. concluded. But our point is that it was in his filial experience that Paul discovered the truths underlying the teaching of Jesus, and led to the formulation of his doctrine of justification by faith. If it be right to call Paul's experiences of assurance and of the witness of the Spirit, doctrines, as Wesley did, then they must have been earlier doctrines of Paul than that of justification. But these Pauline experiences were hardly doctrines. Puritanism formulated them into doctrines, and, so long as they were attached to experience, quite rightly; but in Paul's letters we think of them as experience, the stuff out of which dogmas were afterwards made. Now, the first thing to be said about 'justification by faith' is that the doctrine is not properly described by the phrase. It is a description only of the human experimental side of Paul's doctrine, formulated in antithesis to the doctrine of justification by the works of the Law. When Paul describes his doctrine more largely, he calls it 'justification by *grace*,' or, more comprehensively still, 'salvation by *grace*.' 'Being justified by *grace*' is what he writes in the most formal statement of his teaching in this Epistle.¹ It

¹ Rom. iii. 24.

is God, not faith, that justifies.¹ The most scientific description he gives of this doctrine is in his letter to the Ephesians, where he says, 'By grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.'²

It is important to emphasize this fact, because it is just here that there may have been a theological weakness in the teaching, if not of Wesley, of some of his sons. In point of fact, the tendency to make faith into a work has been noticed and criticized as a danger of Arminian teaching. The Calvinist emphasis was truer at this point, although the content of the word 'grace,' and its action as the omnipotent energy of God on passive objects in Augustinian theology is another question. It must be admitted, I think, that Wesley showed some timidity in his treatment of the doctrines of grace, on account of his quite Anglican dread of Antinomianism. But Paul's doctrine is not fairly stated except in the terms of grace. What needs stressing, if we are really to see what he meant by justification, is that it is given to a man of God's free grace, and can on no account be earned by his conduct, though it is received by his faith. But his faith is not a meritorious action; it is indeed a reaction to God's grace. It is *God* that justifieth.³

No doubt this seems to call for a definition of grace. But what use is it to try to define the indefinable?—and that grace is indefinable is generally admitted. There is a passage in one of the sermons of the late Dr. J. H. Jowett who, throughout his lifetime, was always trying, and, as he himself used to say, consciously failing, to define grace—which may be worth quotation: 'Grace is an energy: it is the divine energy: it is the energy of the divine affection rolling abundantly to the shores of human need. Oh, it is this, and much more than this!' Grace is indefinable. Dr. Dale, with his strong hands yet such exquisite touch, endeavoured to express its secret in a pregnant phrase, but

¹ Rom. viii. 33.² Eph. ii. 8.³ Rom. viii. 33.

he laid down his pen in despair. 'Grace,' he says, 'is love which passes beyond all claims to love. It is love which, after fulfilling the obligations imposed by law, has an unexhausted wealth of kindness! Yes, it is all that; but when we have said all that, the half hath not been told'; and so on. Dr. Jowett¹ was right—grace is indefinable. It means that the love of God exercises itself freely in human souls, and more. The word grace is used to express God's active, unearned love to men plus ∞ —that is, plus those reaches of the divine love which pass knowledge. But the divine grace, though not to be comprehended, can be apprehended by us, or, rather, we can be apprehended by it. 'By grace are ye saved.' The infinite mercy of God, however, with all its power and discernment, can only be seen when we get out of the law court into the home, and the best description of its meaning will always be the love of the Father, in our Lord's great story, receiving His worthless son with pardon and joy. But in this chapter we are dealing rather with Paul's inward experiences and their outcome than with the objective grounds of these experiences in the nature of God. It has been necessary to anticipate our treatment of this subject to the extent of showing that the doctrine of justification by faith is only the description of the experimental side of his larger doctrine of salvation by grace.

The term 'justification by faith' describes Paul's experience in contrast with the law court. Attempts to find acquittal and a verdict there of 'Not guilty' have failed. Is the verdict 'Not guilty' to be found anywhere? The answer is, No! Justification does not mean that, but it means, as we have said, that a relation to God is established for a man who trusts His mercy which is equivalent to a verdict of 'Not guilty' and more. This Paul found in the home of his judge, in the grace of the Father's heart, which he trusted. This he calls—using the vocabulary of the law

¹ J. H. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, p. 336.

court, by which men expressed their thoughts about sin and acquittal—justification by faith. As a matter of fact, he did not receive legal justification. That was the very thing he gave up trying to get. He received divine pardon. We might perhaps say that the great surprise of his life was that, when he looked at a judge and expected condemnation for the sins of which his conscience convicted him, he noticed that the judge had a face familiar to him ; it was the face of His son Jesus, whom Paul knew to be his own elder brother, and so Paul dared to cry ‘Abba, Father.’ When he speaks of justification, and uses the phraseology of the law court, he falls back on a metaphor to describe his experience of a Father’s pardon, in language better understood by people who realized nothing of God’s Fatherhood, but only of His judgeship.

Perhaps we ought to examine the meaning of the word justification. It does not mean making just. Scholars seem agreed about that. It means ‘counting as just,’ ‘deemed just,’ ‘treating as just.’ In the law courts it meant acquittal. Acquittal does not necessarily mean that a man is just, but that from the legal point of view he is treated as if he were just. He may or may not actually be just. Acquittal justifies him. Now, when Paul uses this legal term, no doubt some such meaning was in his mind as that God treated him as if he were a just person, although from the moral point of view, he knew the contrary to be the fact. But that is not the whole content of the word to Paul, for he was rejoicing in the pardon that came from the Father to His son, and he used legal phraseology for the sake of making himself clear to contemporary Jews, although it makes him somewhat obscure to modern men.

But there is a spiritual as well as a legal value in this word if we put it into the right family setting, which is the only true setting of Paul’s new life. The way in practice in which people are made just is by reckoning them just, treating them as if they were just, putting them on their honour. This

word has been much criticized in our day. People have argued that it is immoral to treat a bad man as if he were a good man. 'It is really,' they say, 'building on fiction and not on fact.' 'If Paul was a wrongdoer,' they say, 'no amount of calling him good would make him good.' But is this valid criticism? Is not this the only common-sense method of making anybody good? Is it not the very method pursued by all modern educationalists? Is it not precisely the method pursued by Jesus in all His dealing with degenerates, such as the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house and Zaccheus? Dr. Arnold's method at Rugby of putting boys on their honour, treating them as potential gentlemen instead of actual male brutes, is acknowledged to have created a revolution in the treatment of boys. Zaccheus responded to Jesus because for the first time in his life a good man had treated him as if he was not a cad but a gentleman, and he acted like a gentleman. Other people regarded Zaccheus as a man with money-bags filled with ill-gotten gold, and the last thing any one associated with him was a soul. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, and He found it.

That is the way in which God treats a man. When a sinner, He calls him ; when a sinner is responsive and trustful, He justifies him—that is, He treats the sinner as if he were righteous (after all, it is God's way, so Jesus says, to send His rain and sunshine on the just and on the unjust alike)—and then, treating him as if he were righteous, he actually becomes righteous, 'is glorified,' made Christ-like, that Christ may be the first-born of many brethren.¹ That is to say, 'imputed righteousness' is 'imparted righteousness,' in the household of faith, but nonsense outside of it.

In a word, God's justification of a man is not the acquittal of a law court, but pardoning love. God knows his sins, and yet reckons them not against him. God treats the bad man as if he were a good man ; treats him, not as a judge

¹ Rom. viii. 30.

treats a criminal, but as a father treats a child, and does so because he is His child. But for this to be effective in a man there must on his part be responsive faith and trust. A man must take himself at God's valuation of him in Christ. The faith that justifies is a man's acceptance of the grace of God—the unsearchable fatherly love of God to His child. Justification by faith is significant as part of the family ethic, but, considered as part of a legal process, it is illegal. It is only in the home, where the child trusts the father who believes in the child, that a man can be said to be justified by faith. Paul knew this when the Spirit of God's Son cried in his heart, 'Abba, Father.'

And this also means that God is Himself just when He justifies. From the point of view of the law court, He could not be justified for forgiving a known transgressor of the Law without inflicting punishment upon him, but in the home, where He is really known, it is immoral not to forgive and moral to forgive. The Parable of the Prodigal Son declares that to the whole world. The elder brother and the day-long workers in the vineyard say, 'It is not fair,' because they are thinking from the standpoint of the labour yard and secular morality. In the labour yard one naturally expects the criticism, 'It is not fair,' when an employer acts, not like an employer, but a father. In the home one resents the criticism, 'It is not fair,' from the lips of one who acts, not like a member of a family, but like a labourer in a vineyard. Paul, whose training naturally made him judge everybody and himself from the point of view of the law court, could not believe in the fairness of free pardon until he discovered that the judge whom he feared was really a Father, whose property is always to have mercy, and who loved to welcome returning prodigals; and, when he pondered on the pardon which he gladly received, he named it justification by faith—the faith being his reception of it. Is God just when He justifies? Was the father acting justly when he received the returning prodigal

with a welcome which neither he nor his elder brother thought he deserved? Paul's answer to such a question would be, Get into the family spirit as I have done, and you will know what it means to say from your heart, 'Abba, Father,' and you will realize that mercy is God's justice. The harmony between Paul's filial joy and his feeling that 'It is not fair' is made by the family ethic and by no other.

Now, while Paul finds the solution of his own moral problem in his experience of filial relationship to God through fraternal relationship with Christ, so that he can preach 'apart from the Law,' a righteousness both of God and man, it does not follow that he convinced everybody else. It is quite evident that he did not, and that his solution was much criticized in his lifetime, and has been ever since. For, after all, it is a solution based on spiritual experience, and where that experience lacks it is not easy to follow. When Paul's solution has been turned into a series of formulas detached from experience, it has often resulted in the calamitous consequences feared by his contemporary critics, who find many supporters amongst men lacking in the filial experience. Paul's solution depends on acceptance of the family ethic, also taught by Jesus, but by no means always practised, even by his followers.

The critics of Paul's teaching in his own days seem chiefly to have been Jews, and as he states his gospel to the pagan world in the Epistle to the Romans he is conscious of the queries of his fellow countrymen. They had been educated in the Law, possessed higher moral ideas and practised a more noble moral life than that of any contemporary people. Paul spent much effort in answering their objections, the partial validity of which he unquestionably felt. The objections were twofold—national and ethical. He deals with the ethical objections to his theory of justification by faith in chap. iv. and finds confirmation of his views in the Law and in the Prophets,¹ and with the general effect of

¹ Rom. iii. 21.

his theory on the Jewish mind, in chaps. ix. and xi. His answer to Jewish national criticisms at this point will be dealt with in a later chapter. The importance of these Jewish national objections has obviously diminished with the centuries, and, in the nature of the case, could never appeal to the Christian world as it did to a Jew of the first century.

But the moral objections are different. They remain a permanent criticism from the standpoint of non-experients of Christianity who care about morality. They are expressed and answered more than once by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. And why not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say)? Let us do evil that good may come.¹ Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?² What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under grace?³ Paul felt these criticisms. He knew, and all Christians know, how easy it is for men to point out their inconsistencies, and Paul's bold challenge, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' although justified by men who believe in the family ethic and have experienced the saving power of the divine grace, might easily give colour to the criticism of non-experients. Paul's answer, of course, is that his doctrine of 'Super-nomianism,' only partially visualized by his opponents as Antinomianism, was not immorality, but a higher and more effective morality. While his heart realized God's fatherly grace, he did not mean, when he declared a righteousness apart from the Law, a righteousness inferior to that of the Law, but superior. 'Do we, then, make the Law of none effect through faith? God forbid; nay, we establish the Law.'⁴ 'What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. God sent His Son that the ordinance of the Law might be fulfilled in us.'⁵ Paul teaches righteousness, but a new way to it, a different relation to it, a life in

¹ Rom. iii. 8.² Rom. vi. 1.³ Rom. vi. 16.⁴ Rom. iii. 31.⁵ See Rom. viii. 3 and 4.

which active search for it is secondary, Christ, who was the 'end of the Law,' being all in all. The values of the Law were taken out of the lawcourt and re-set in the home. The rightness of Paul's claim has been so fully vindicated by the higher morality of Christians, and their conquest of the world by its witness, that it need not be argued. But, in this Epistle, Paul definitely appeals to the ethical experience of Christians, who, because they are in Christ and walk after the Spirit, do not do the things of the flesh, but the things of the Spirit. Rom. viii. is not merely to be referred to as emotional experience, but, as Matthew Arnold refers to it, as 'ethical experience.' But the connexion between the Spirit's activity in a man's soul causing him to say 'Abba, Father,' and the Spirit's quickening of his will, is expressed in Rom. viii. as it is not in Rom. vi., to which chapter Matthew Arnold makes his chief appeal for an understanding of Paul.

Matthew Arnold's use of Rom. vi. is religiously the most valuable part of his essay. He finds in Paul's teaching that dying with Christ, and union with Him in His risen life, expressing itself in righteousness, is the central core of Paul's doctrine. He calls Paul's doctrine by the name of Necrosis¹; but it must not be forgotten that as a formulated dogma, though a perfectly true one, it is Matthew Arnold, the protestor against formulated dogmas, not Paul, who is its author. 'Necrosis,' not justification by faith, he claims to be Paul's central doctrine. It is undoubtedly his central doctrine in the sense that it is his chief ethical precept, but as dogma, as intellectual formula, this can hardly be maintained. Paul's own announcement of his gospel in Rom. iii. 21-6 must take precedence as an intellectual formulation of his teachings. Necrosis is rather the ethical and practical justification of his central doctrine than his central doctrine. Whatever critics say about the new righteousness, it works, and

¹ That is, 'Dying with Christ.'

can be commended to Christians as a practice which will work. But Matthew Arnold is perfectly right when he treats the precept, 'Die with Christ to the Law of the flesh ; live with Christ to the Law of the mind,' as the chief things Paul told people to do. From the point of view of conduct alone he can hardly be criticized for saying that Paul's principal words are not 'calling,' 'justification,' 'sanctification,' but 'dying with Christ,' 'resurrection with Christ,' 'glory with Christ.' But the weakness of Arnold's argument is that he does not tell men *how* to die with Christ. The only way they can die and rise again is to be united with Him. All Paul's experiences come through his union with Christ. It is as a fellow heir that he cries, 'Father' ; it is in fellowship that he dies—crucified with Christ—and rises to a new life—raised together with Christ. There is a doctrine deeper than Necrosis—the doctrine of union with Christ.

But Paul was a thinker as well as a practical preacher, and when he tried to think out reasons for things, although he may not have formulated a scientific theological system, he had to account for his emotional as well as his ethical experience, and to harmonize the new life into which he had entered, by no effort of his own but by faith, with his views of a moral universe and a just judge. This Matthew Arnold ignores, and treats as non-existent the mystical experiences of Paul which lay at the root of his intellectual and moral life. While Rom. vi., like Col. iii. and other passages, are rather exhortations to practise the moral life, inherent in union with the risen Christ, than actual accounts of experience of it, they would be meaningless were they not based on Paul's own experiences. We have a right to infer, as Rom. viii., Gal. ii. 29, and other passages suggest, that Paul was speaking from his experience of what a risen life in heavenly places in communion with Christ Jesus meant in moral quickening, when he told people that Christianity was 'dying with Christ' and 'rising with

Christ'—a dying to the old world, with its evil ways and good ways, and living a new kind of life which was quickened by the Spirit of the Christ who lived. This new life is a mystical life; it is created, it is true, by a man's own dying to sin, but it is rooted in Christ, and can only be lived by his walking with Christ, his fellowship with Christ, his life lived by faith in the Son of God who lived with him, and, indeed, is his very life.

When he gives an account of Paul's ethical precept to die to the world, Arnold is compelled to fall back on the language of mysticism. Faith in Christ is the dynamic he asserts. But this would mean faith, not in an historical Jesus, but in one who lives a risen life. 'Science,' says Arnold, 'knows nothing about the Logos or about the Second Advent'; what, then, may we ask, does science know of a mystical Christ like Him who is risen in Paul's life? Or of a faith in such a Christ as a fact in the universal life of men? Falling in love with an idea will not produce the results which Arnold claims to have come from Paul's passionate devotion to Christ. The truth is, science cannot account for the experiences which create the Christian life, because they are outside its range. Why should it try? Why should a writer who knows that such experiences are outside the range of science pose, while explaining ethical life by non-scientific mysticism, as scientific? What it means is that an honest examination of Paul's ethical experiences will prove that they have a mystical basis, and would be meaningless without it. Paul's religious experiences, ethical or mystical, are experiences either in or through the Son whom it pleased God to reveal in him. And Paul's answer to his critics' moral objection to his doctrine of a new righteousness is, 'It works.' Like Galileo, he can say, in spite of all criticisms and anathemas, 'It moves! It moves!'

But that does not mean that Paul's answer was satisfactory to his critics. It could not be, because his critics were living in a world where their objection was

valid. They knew nothing of the quickening experiences of the new life. A forgiveness of sins such as Paul preached was, from their standpoint, condonation of evil-doing. Free forgiveness, without penance, fines, and imprisonment, is not known in law court morality, and, although it is known in the family, the thought that men are really the family of God, and that God is really their father, is one difficult for men to practise as a fact, though easy to receive as a sentiment. Once realized and practised, forgiveness becomes natural, and it does not create sin, but makes it more difficult ; but those whose hearts are not open to the divine love find it difficult to understand the morality of those whose are. From an exclusively legal or secular view the doctrine of Paul will always appear dangerous, if not criminal, and the fact that men who have accepted this doctrine without genuine experience have presumed, like the eighteenth-century Antinomians, on the mercy of God, and have wrought sin that grace might abound, confirms the critic in his objection. The new righteousness needs the new dynamic, otherwise it may be inferior to the old. The tendency of the Church to teach divine forgiveness with qualifications is illustrated by the penance system of Rome and the minor disciplines of Protestantism. And, in our own country, the normal conventional morality of the average Englishman is much nearer to Jewish legalism than to Paul's family ethic. The objections to the morality of Paul's doctrine of forgiveness are perfectly natural from people who lack the courage to see the moral implications of a real Fatherhood of God ; but although it is not often said, they are really objections also to that of Jesus.

XIII

PAUL'S EXPERIMENTAL DOCTRINE OF THE GROUNDS OF SALVATION

I. PAUL'S EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO ATONEMENT

MODERN psychology classifies men as introverts and extraverts. It is doubtful whether any actual man belongs to either one class or the other, but the classification is useful for distinguishing persons of dominantly outward practical activity from those of the brooding introspective type. Was Paul introvert or extravert? One can hardly class amongst the introverts so practical a man concerned so deeply with the objects of his mission, and yet what of his introspection? The truth is, that apart from his analysis of himself in Rom. vii. there is little evidence that Paul was an introvert. His words about the inward Christ are regarded by many as an examination of himself, but to his own consciousness it was not himself but Christ of whom he was thinking. Christ was an object other than himself, an object of his affection and faith. His relation to him was extravertive, Christ was really objective—as even Wrede admits—to Paul's own consciousness. Perhaps Thouless is right in suggesting that a third mystical type might be described by the word 'deouvert.'

The interior experiences of Paul which we have been examining were his reactions to objects pressing upon him from outside his own consciousness. They are not the reflections of a brooding mind, but the reactions of a happy one towards the objects which make him happy. More than once we have found it necessary, in treating the doctrines which he framed from his subjective experiences, to anticipate

our treatment of the objects to which he reacted. Justification by faith we affirmed was only an account of the response of Paul to God's grace. But it is easier to show the direct influence of his emotional and volitional experiences on the formulation of his doctrines than to describe the objects of his experience, for the reason that, when he talks of grace, God, Christ, and the Cross of Christ, he is speaking of what we are often compelled, without close definition, to accept as data, sometimes because they are indefinable, and sometimes because it is impossible for us to see for ourselves, objects as visualized by other people. Experience regarded as affect and conation is verifiable, because that our own emotional and volitional life is like that of another man, while the objects of experience are different in fact, or may be differently conceived and differently expressed by different people. Hence our treatment of the objective grounds, forces, and persons behind the religious experience of Paul suffers from a qualification absent in our treatment of his emotional and ethical experiences.

But it may be urged that Paul himself was not content only to assert his joy, gladness of heart, and liberty of spirit, that is to say his sense of fraternal relations with Christ and filial relations to God. The value of these is ultimately in the Christ he knows, and not in his knowledge of the Christ, and the fact of the Christ whom he experienced, as well as his experience of Christ, is a predominant factor in his religious doctrine. What the content to his mind of the Christ of his experience was we can never know. How far his assertions about what Christ said as to his pre-existence were the results of his own experience, or conclusions he came to from information from other people, or from his own intuitions or deductions, must necessarily be doubtful. These facts must, therefore, be remembered by any one who examines his doctrines—largely, but not exclusively, his experimental doctrines of the objective grounds of salvation.

No claim is made in this volume that experience was the only fact in Paul's doctrine, but it is claimed that it was the vital one. Experience may well account for his beliefs about Christ as well as in Christ, because it is the source of intuitive deductions, evidencing such as possibly his belief in our Lord's pre-existence ; but, admittedly, there were other factors. His belief in God was the inheritance from his race ; and the righteous God of the Jews was to Paul an *a priori* postulate. He knew the history of Jesus, and was particularly impressed by the story of the Last Supper, Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus, and although it cannot be demonstrated by definite citations from his writings, one may be quite sure that he was thoroughly conversant both with the ethical and theological teaching of our Lord. He evidently knew the Old Testament from cover to cover. As a missionary travelling in foreign lands he was in continual contact with foreign ideas, and must have been interested in their similarities with and differences from his own religion. He was a practical man ; adaptability was the first item of his missionary programme and he used, no doubt, such words as 'mystery,'¹ which came from heathen sources, not to disseminate heathen notions, but to express Christian ideas, and, one of the liveliest men who ever walked this earth, he reflected in many other ways in his own mind the times in which he lived and the multi-coloured life and thought which characterized them. Hence it is probable that the further Paul was detached from his subjective experience in the formulation of his doctrine the more its expression would be moulded by other influences than his own affects and conations. This does not mean that it was untrue, but that we can less rely on his experience for the verification of those doctrines which deal with the objective grounds of salvation than of those which deal with the subjective, and some of his speculations and arguments must be tested by an entirely different scale of values.

¹ See Eph. iii. 3-4.

Though the objective and historical ground of his doctrine is hardly within the purview of this volume, we may note how experimental even his objective doctrines are, if indeed they can be isolated as a separate part of his great inclusive doctrine, which may be called compendiously 'salvation by grace.' We have already dealt with its subjective content in his consciousness of fraternal relationship with Christ and co-filial relation to God in Christ. Now we propose to examine his doctrine on its objective side, from the experimental point of view. This teaching of Paul is expressed from many standpoints and by different symbols. It teaches both the new righteousness 'apart from the law' for man, and the justice of God.

The objective grounds of salvation, would, if he were challenged, be regarded by Paul as necessary to validate his doctrine of personal experience. Paul sums up his gospel twice in the Epistle to the Romans. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel' he cries, 'for it is the power of God to salvation.' The gospel, as the parallel passage in 1 Cor. i. shows, is 'the word of the Cross'—Christ crucified—'the power of God and the wisdom of God,' but he does not tell us what the content of his doctrine is until he comes to Rom. iii. 24-30, when he sums up his message, 'But now, apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all them that believe: for there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' That can so far be subjectively apprehended, but then we come to the objective grounds of his doctrine, 'Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation (or propitiatory) through faith by His blood to show His righteousness . . . that He Himself might be just and a justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.' The objective grounds of Paul's message are to be found, that is to say, through Christ crucified. Paul makes many references

to the redeeming work of Christ; hence, while we are primarily concerned with Paul's experimental approach to doctrine, one thing must be reiterated as to the plain meaning of Rom. iii. 24-8. Whatever interpretation is given to the phrase 'righteousness of God,' whether the phrase is thought of objectively as descriptive of an attribute of God, or subjectively as the new righteousness men receive from God in Christ, or whether both interpretations are justified, the important phrase to emphasize is that which summarizes the purpose of the process of divine grace as a means, not only of justifying man, but of justifying man in harmony with the justice of God: that '*He Himself might be just . . . and a justifier of them that believe.*' What the exact meaning of the Greek word translated propitiation or propitiatory is it is difficult to say, but, if the word means propitiation, it is obviously very hazardous to ground on it a doctrine unsupported and even contradicted by other sayings of Paul. There is not a passage to support the notion that Jesus was comparable to pagan sacrifices offered to turn away the wrath of an angry God; for it is highly improbable that the words sacrifice¹ and Passover² are used in a propitiatory significance. Furthermore, Paul's argument that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself cannot be harmonized with such a notion, and the very phrasing of the passages from the Romans that God set forth Christ as a propitiation would mean that God set forth Christ—the Christ in whom God was—to propitiate Himself, which hardly makes sense. Whatever Paul says, he means that God was *in* Christ. He does not think of Jesus as one whom His Father tortured to relieve His own wrath and to justify Him in not torturing Paul. Words like

The Lord, in the day
Of His anger, did lay
My sins on the Lamb, and He bore them away

¹ Eph. v. 2.

² 1 Cor. v. 7.

are not Pauline ; and such a sentiment would never have been attributed to Paul if people had not mistakenly thought he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. The symbolism of that Epistle, when its highly metaphorical language is treated as if it were literal, might, perhaps, justify such views of God. It might, perhaps—but even that is doubtful. But Paul is not responsible for what another man wrote.

The tragedy of much biblical interpretation has been the failure to realize that men without imagination often miss the truth. They turn metaphors into logical propositions, and try to build up their unimaginatively conceived formulas into unimaginatively rigid doctrinal systems. Not only do they isolate doctrine from experience—a dangerous process in itself—but make winged poetry do the work of four-footed logic. Instead of making Cinderella into a princess, they turn the princess into Cinderella. Logicians who are useful when they deal with algebraical formulas are dangerous when they substitute metaphorical images of high poetic value for their numerical signs. Most of the figures by which Paul expresses his thoughts about redeeming grace, as will be seen later, are highly metaphorical. But, with all that, we have no desire to evade the fact that honest interpretation must assert that salvation, according to Paul, comes to man through the objective reality of Christ who is the crucified.

Now what did the death of Christ mean in Paul's *experience*? It must be noted first that Paul was not a witness of the historical crucifixion, hence his first experience of Christ was of Christ risen and glorified. It is noteworthy, too, that when he outlined to the Philippians his spiritual programme he placed the resurrection before the crucifixion, 'that I might know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.' That was the actual chronological order of Paul's religious experiences. The thought of Messiah crucified was outrageous to Saul the unconverted Jew, and the vision of the risen Christ was

necessary to make him see the glory of that shameful cross. He saw, perhaps not all at once, that the endurance of such infamous shame by the Messiah was the one measure with which he could in any degree fathom the depths of immeasurable love ; so that ultimately he gloried in the most shameful thing in the world—a cross—for which early Christians had to apologize. But Paul would never have hurled at the world his defiance, ' God forbid that I should glory save in the cross,' if he had not known, by union with Christ, the power of His resurrection, and thus have entered into the fellowship of His suffering. So effectively did he do this that the risen Christ of his experience was always with him. ' He who *is* the crucified,' never, as an examination of Paul's tenses shows,¹ ' He who *was* crucified.'² The cross became to him, instead of an historical conception, a spiritual and living reality. Paul would have been glad to sing of the Christ whom he knew :

Five bleeding wounds He *bears*,
Received on Calvary,

and could have felt the truth of the verses :

Crown Him the Lord of Love!
Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds yet visible above
In beauty glorified ;
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright.

Hence Paul thought of the Crucifixion and Cross of Christ through his personal experience of the risen Christ crucified with whom he lived in daily fellowship, and he did not hesitate, when speaking of the Lord's Supper, to remind

¹ See Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 197.

² Gal. iii. 1 ; 1 Cor. ii. 2 ; 1 Cor. i. 23.

those who were in communion with Christ, and celebrating it by obeying His words, that broken bread and poured-out wine proclaim the Lord's death until He come, when all men shall gaze on those glorious scars ; yea, they also which pierced Him. Communion with the living Christ is communion with one ' who is the crucified.'

Some of the greatest words of Paul—quick with emotion—were direct experiences of the living Christ 'who is the crucified,' of which the most conspicuous is ' Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' Those words, more than any others, were the vital inspiration of Luther, Bunyan, and Charles Wesley. Luther's emphasis of their individual significance for every man who says them for himself has been immeasurably fruitful. The Christ with whom Paul lived in union was the living Christ, but it was the love of the crucified which overwhelmed him ; the love so unspeakable and indescribable, so individual and individually realized, declared by the Cross. Perhaps his whole theology of the atonement, and all other verifiable theologies of it, are contained in the words ' loved me and gave Himself for me.' And so, when he wrote his most illuminating words about Christ's work as a reconciling ministry, and told how He died for all, that all should live to Him, we once again come to deeply realized experience, the ' love of Christ constraineth us,' driving him into his ambassadorial work of calling men to be reconciled to God. His words in Rom. v. must not be forgotten, although reflection may there be mingled with experience. ' When we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for the good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if, while we were sinners, we become reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.'

In this passage, perhaps more than in any other, we can follow Paul's method of formulating his doctrine from his experience. 'I, a persecutor and sinner,' he seems to say, 'was the object of Christ's death on the cross. God's own excessive love, in other places called grace, expressed itself through His Son, in whom He was reconciling the world to Himself, towards me a blasphemer, persecutor, chief of sinners.' The wonder of it thrills him. The love of God in the Cross of Christ was the supreme act of God's invasion of the world by love. For as John says: 'Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Paul has realized all that as personal experience, and argued from it that such reconciling love—treating enemies as if they were friends, and bad men as if they were good—*justifying* them—another fact verified by experience—is an indication of the ultimate salvation which is in Christ, in the fellowship of men with their risen Lord. Belief mingles here, no doubt, with experience. Christ's death was a fact of history which Paul's experience of the risen Christ 'who is the crucified' explained to him. Why did Paul believe that the death of Jesus was 'for sins'? Was it simply a deduction from the experience he enjoyed of the risen Christ 'who is the crucified'? That it was only that is most unlikely. Paul's earliest information from the disciples was that 'Christ died for our sins.' It was the actual claim made by Jesus at His last supper.¹ When Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus, he knew Him as the Lord whom His disciples already claimed to have died for their sins, and discovered a new righteousness in Him. Hence by means of his union with one 'who is the crucified' his own experience confirmed the message of the men whom he had persecuted.

These are the passages in which Paul's experience about the Cross most vividly expresses itself. The same facts are to be found in his other sayings on the subject; expressed

¹ Matt. xx. 28.

often beautifully, but with not quite the same immediate experimental feeling, although words such as 'Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' and 'He who was rich for our sakes became poor,' are charged, as are many others, with emotion. All Paul's more general sayings about the Cross correspond with his experimental sayings. His statements of the facts are never cool, detached, doctrinal statements but always touched with emotion, as the following quotations show : 'Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweet savour' ; the highly metaphorical words 'Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed for us,' and the description of the whole work of grace in his later letter to the Ephesians, when he spoke of a Lord 'who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He hath loved us,' or 'In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses.' When he remembered to say, as he bade husbands love their wives, 'Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it,' or when appealing to the Romans to be generous to the weak, he referred to the brother for whom Christ died, or when he spoke to the Colossians of their peace through the blood of the Cross, and of their translation from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God, it is evident that nothing so touched his heart as the unsearchable love of Him 'who is the crucified,' 'who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Paul's account of the objective grounds of salvation, in a word, were never very objective.

The difference, from this point of view, between formal treatises on the Atonement and Paul's references to the death of Christ, is simply startling. The formal dogmas of theologians are to Paul's experimental sayings about the Cross what very dull botany is to very beautiful flowers. Can Paul's rich flowers of experience be pressed and dried without losing the bloom, life, and fragrance which is their chief value? Paul did not botanize at the Cross. He did

not express his views about it in modern scientific language. He realized, of course, that, behind his experience, objective realities gave grounds for his hopes, but even in Rom. iii. he was not precise and scientific, as his parenthesis shows, in the formulation of his language.

Paul's attitude towards the objective historical facts, and their underlying implications, is not that of a scientific theologian but that of a man who is telling in fragments, and by metaphors, the story of what happened to him. Let us ask a question we asked earlier. Did Paul ever read the Parable of the Prodigal Son?¹ If he had read it, would he have found there a simpler description of salvation than his own? Let it be assumed that Paul did read the story; how would he have commented upon it? Would he not have noted extraordinary similarities between the Prodigal's experiences and his own? The Prodigal had renounced all claims to filial relations with his father, and decided to seek for nothing but employment on his father's farm, on a purely economic basis. The filial relationship he had already renounced and would never reclaim; and yet, when his father saw him, he welcomed him with kindness and received him with joy. Was not that Paul's experience too? If he did not regard his Father as an employer of labour, he did regard him as a judge from whom he expected no verdict but 'guilty,' but from whom he actually received a warm-hearted pardon and the glorious liberty of a son of God. Surprise is always the note of such experiences of religion. 'Amazing love—how can it be,' was the cry of the Wesleys. So far, at least, the parallel is exact. But now the differences begin: the Prodigal arose of himself and went home: Paul did nothing of the sort. Paul was definitely arrested by the hand of Christ when he was pursuing his route to a far country, and was brought home by Him, and, in companionship with Him, said 'Abba, Father,' and found a grace rich in mercy.

¹ See p. 175.

Imagine Paul reading our Lord's story. Would he not say, 'Oh, what should I have done if I had been in this poor fellow's case? Should I have arisen and gone home? His was a piteous case: he had an elder brother who ignored and disliked him. Why did not the man go out to seek his brother, both for his father's and his brother's sake? Suppose my elder brother had been like that! Yes, the Prodigal's case was different from mine!' And then he might read earlier on in the chapter, and find his own elder brother, whom he calls the first-born among many brethren, described as a shepherd seeking a lost sheep. 'Yes' he would say, 'that was my case.' Do not the words of a simple modern hymn give a fair description of Paul's experiences?

Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way.

That mark out the mountain's track?

They were shed for one who had gone astray,

Ere the shepherd could bring him back.

Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?

They are pierced to-night by many a thorn.

That was Paul's experience! Jesus Christ, the first-born of many brethren, the Christ 'who is the crucified,' having loved Paul and given Himself for him on the cross, had apprehended him, and by His love constrained him. The grace of God was made manifest in the death of Jesus, because He was the Son of God, and had sought Paul, imprisoned under the law, and delivered him through His dying love and risen power. This Son of God was the Jesus Christ of his experience, who delivered him and told him that He was his elder brother, and walked, as it were, in company with him to the Father's house, so that, united with Him, Paul says, 'Abba, Father.' It is in and through the Son and His love that Paul found the Father. This is clearly indicated by Paul's treatment of the divine family in Rom. viii. All his trust was in Christ the Redeemer. Let

men believe in Him, trust Him, and however far away they have wandered, He will bring them back.

All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring.

But a second contrast is noteworthy. When the Prodigal returned home he was silent. When Paul returned he never stopped talking, and many tongue-tied prodigals have been thankful to Paul for the utterance that was given to him. Paul, say his critics, talked about the price paid, and the ransom given, and the blood of the Cross, and Jesus said nothing about them. What need of all this? How much more impressive the simplicity of the story of Jesus. But they miss the point; Jesus spoke about God's mercy from the standpoint of God's Son. Paul says, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.' Should we have felt the graciousness of Jesus if He had talked about His grace and its free gifts? Even men do not talk about their own generosity when they give presents. But the man who receives generosity, if he is a gentleman, talks about it, unless he is tongue-tied, and Paul never tired of glorying in a love 'which passes knowledge.' Paul was the receiver, Jesus the giver, and the standpoint from which Paul the redeemed talked of redemption is not that of the Redeemer who gave it. Jesus never used the word grace; Paul never tired of doing so.

Would the Prodigal Son have given the same account of his experience as Paul gave? It may, of course, be answered that one story is fiction, only illustrative of the return of a penitent soul to a Heavenly Father, and the other is the history of the discovery by an historical person that God was his Father. It is true that our Lord's story is a beautiful incident from human life, illustrative, and purposely illustrative, of the sort of pardon God does give to sinners

who return to Him, but not descriptive of all the influences that cause them to return ; but even so, dare we say that no man comes to the Father except in the way that Paul was brought to Him? And yet ' plans of salvation ' have often assumed that that was the case. Paul recited how grace found him, and generalized from his own experience, but he did not necessarily mean that there was nothing else to be said. So far as he was concerned, he knew it was the direct love of the Christ ' who is the crucified ' which snatched him out of his captivity, and that it was in Christ that he came to God, and that that way is open for all men.

2. THE PAULINE METAPHORS OF ATONEMENT

It is not within the scope of this book to construct, criticize, or support objective theories of the atonement, but to show how far Paul's teachings about it are the result of his experience. But it must be said that such dogmas as are founded on theories and speculations are convincing, in proportion, as they keep close to experience as Paul did. Moreover, we must express the opinion that the critical analysis of the words of Paul on this subject, by supporters and opponents of the many various views of the atonement, is often founded on a wrong conception of Paul's writings. The treatment of Paul's letters, as if they were formal theology, carefully expressed by a scholar in academic formulas, underlies the bulk of writing on the atonement, but the assumptions as to the character, not only of the apostle's Greek, but also of his mind, seem singularly ill-founded. The further detachment of these passages from the context of vivid religious experiences, and the treatment of them as if they were scientific terms, is a hopeless venture. Doctrines of the atonement are innumerable, and are nearly all built up, either on conclusions from meticulous studies of Paul's words, which the Koine has made most improbable, or to support abstract philosophies, which, whether true or

false, are mere speculations, sometimes of brilliant men and sometimes of men who are far from brilliant, argued on general principles, immeasurably distant from the experimental mood in which Paul wrote passages, which were generally the expression of some melting devotional moment, for the edification of his readers. The verbal treatment of Paul still in use is a heritage from the times in which men's belief in verbal inspiration justified precise weighing of the mere letter. How many scholars, who use the verbal exegetical method of the past, preserve that belief? Paul was a missionary, not a scholar. The figures he used were a preacher's figures, not an academic's. The last thing in the world he thought of was that any one would try to forge a logical system out of the metaphors with which he tried, often on the spur of the moment, and without connecting one with another, to express experiences and thoughts which he knew were only partially communicable. It may be felt that it is impertinent, for one who has been, almost exclusively, employed in a missionary ministry, to write almost disrespectfully about the thousands of volumes based by pious and learned men on the presuppositions now challenged, but this much may be said, by way of apology, that Paul was not, in the technical sense, a scholar, but a practical missionary, and that men who have done the sort of work Paul did, and dealt with similar degenerates, have, perhaps, a right to speak, though lacking in the technical knowledge of those who spend their lives amongst books, but know little about men, and nothing by practical contact about brutally sinful men. What does a preacher do to-day when he speaks to people with no Christian culture, and with whose hearts and minds he finds it difficult to discover a *point d'appui*? He certainly does not split hairs, nor give meticulous heed to fine distinctions between popularly indistinguishable prepositions, nor trouble much whether a metaphor he uses one day will be difficult to harmonize with one he uses another, but, with what wit and grace God

gave him, he uses the best language he can find at the moment, to bring home the truth or the aspect of the truth which he is trying to illustrate. This must have been the case with Paul, and much of the studied labour given to a detailed scrutiny of his words and syllables has been misleading, wasteful, and sometimes positively mischievous. What, therefore, is necessary is to discern the general sense, and to remember that the value of a metaphor, particularly as used by an orator or a poet, generally lacks the logical significance given to it by a theologian. It expresses an aspect of a truth, sometimes a very fleeting aspect of a truth, for the purposes of the moment in which it is used.

Deissmann, whom we have described before as the most human of academics, has realized the non-academic character and missionary significance of Paul's writing, as perhaps no other scholar has. And nothing in his book on Paul is more valuable, if we correctly understand him, than his insistence on the fact that the great Pauline metaphors of the grace of God in Christ the crucified are not to be regarded as complementary descriptions of different chapters of a doctrine of the atonement, to be forged into a logical unity, but different descriptions of the same process and facts at different times, by metaphors which best suited the occasion on which they were uttered, the people to whom they were spoken, or the fleeting mood of the apostle who spoke them.

Paul's arguments were *argumenta ad homines*. That is clear enough, when to the Jews he became a Jew and argued with them by interpreting the Old Testament by the very method they used, only more efficiently. This is not a type of argument approved of by the strict logician, because it seems to him to have nothing but a relative value. But a missionary, when he speaks to people in the open air, must resort to such methods. Paul spoke to philosophical Athens like a philosopher, and his hearers were less angry than amused. Paul's object was to be 'understood' by the *people*. He was seeking souls, not literary wreaths. Let a

man address a crowd of listeners in Hyde Park, and he will not despise *argumenta ad homines*—that is, if he wants a crowd to speak to. Paul had the greatest truths to speak that any man ever uttered, and almost incommunicable experiences of Christ to communicate to men. And he sought, as any popular speaker talking to the people would, the illustration and figures most likely to impress those truths on those to whom he was writing or speaking. He was always striving to find words, and often finding wonderful ones, to express thoughts, and particularly experiences, which had really never been expressed before. It taxed every faculty he had to find language which gave even a hint of the amazing grace of God which had found him, and to describe what the risen Messiah 'who is the crucified' meant to him. He might have said, like a hymn of later times :

In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine !

but he, Paul, did his best. In a series of vivid expressions he told what his experience meant, and, in telling it, described Christ and His love by some metaphor which matched his experience. He picked up metaphors wherever he could find them, not with the deliberation of a literary man, but as a popular missionary picks them up. He was of course no ordinary missionary : he was a man of extraordinary genius and, perhaps, unequalled in devotion to his Lord and Master, and his figures had a richness of quality of an unusual kind, but they were figures which came from the ordinary life, and had special significance for people who lived an ordinary life and kept their eyes and ears open. Take words like 'redemption,' 'bought with a price,' 'reconciliation,' 'sacrifice,' which have special reference to what are called the objective grounds of salvation (though he used the same metaphorical

medium to express his more immediate subjective experience), and think of them as popular figures, as they undoubtedly were, and of their effect on his hearers and readers. He is writing, for instance, to the Ephesians, and speaks of 'Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood,' and reminds the Corinthians that they were 'bought with a price,' or, in a very striking figure, speaks to the Colossians of the forgiveness of their trespasses as a cancellation of debt, 'having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, He hath taken it away, having nailed it to the cross,' and then mixes the metaphor with that of the Roman Triumph, as he goes on to write, 'having put off from Himself the principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' What a series of pictures is suggested! The ancient slave-market, for instance, where men were bought and sold. Paul had been a slave to sin, and the love of Christ had set him free. So Paul says of Christ—Redeemer—'in whom we have redemption.' The figure was well understood. Just as a slave was redeemed by some kinsman paying his ransom, so God's love in Christ meant that Paul the slave had become a free man. But the logician takes hold of the figure and asks to whom was the ransom paid. One said to the devil, and another to the eternal Law of Righteousness, and both failed to see that, whatever a practical missionary speaker does, he does not try to make a metaphor run on all fours, but, when he has got a particular use out of it, thinks of another metaphor. Paul was not thinking about the person to whom the price was paid, he was thinking that he was free as a manumitted slave, and thanked his Deliverer. Paul felt that he was a debtor to the law, and that he owed much righteousness which he had never paid. When he said, 'Abba, Father,' his obligation was gone. It was through Christ 'who is the crucified' that his liberation from this pressing debt had been wrought. What more natural than the vigorous figure of the cancelled bond which he imagines

nailed to the cross. And what a superb glorying in the cross, when he pictures that shameful death as really being like the triumph of some Roman general. The love in the cross rose triumphant above the forces which tried to extinguish it. Such figures cannot be turned into logic. They express vividly an aspect of the truth, not all the sides of the truth suggested by other considerations.

Paul wrote letters to pagan cities where sacrifices in heathen temples were as familiar a fact of daily life as the slave-market. Was it wonderful that some reminiscences, perhaps of the temple of Diana, should come to him when he wrote to the Ephesians about the sweet savour of the incense. Was it not a natural figure of the self-sacrifice of Him who offered Himself and became obedient to the death of the cross—where love was the sweetest and most pervasive thing in the world? But to suppose that a reference to sacrifices so familiar justifies one in working out analogies between ancient animal sacrifices and Jesus, on all possible analogical sides, is treating metaphor as logic, which is a great literary crime. Or was it surprising, in thinking of all that he had experienced of the power of Christ to take the place of the best things of Judaism, that he should call Him our passover, in a passage crammed with allusions to Jewish ceremonial. All that was of comfort, deliverance, and life in Judaism he had found in Christ. And even the fact that he uses in Rom. iii. 24 the word to denote the propitiatory sacrifices of the heathen must not necessarily be taken literally to involve all that was meant by heathen sacrifices.

Paul's metaphors of God's grace in the death of Christ give wonderful glimpses into the depths of God's love as experienced in Paul's heart, but it is a most precarious proceeding to treat them as logical formulas, to be built up into a system of thought. Paul certainly framed no such systematic theology. And such a system, even if the particular aspect of truth, illustrated by a symbol, were so

isolated that it could be translated into logic, could never be even logically satisfactory, unless it was quite certain that Paul used no other symbol descriptive of divine grace in some other aspect, which might be as difficult to harmonize with the metaphors we already have, as a propitiatory sacrifice is with 'God in Christ' reconciling the world to Himself. Theologians often treat Paul's writings as if he said nothing else than what is recorded, in what is certainly a selection, and possibly only a few fragments of his correspondence. Paul's theology, so far as it is verifiable, is true, because it is the result of Paul's experience, and although systems may be framed from it which are not Paul's, by an Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm, Abelard, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley—some one of which contradictory systems may conceivably be true—they can never hope to have the verifiable validity of the Pauline teachings founded in his personal experience of 'God in Christ.'

3. IS THERE A SYSTEMATIC DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT BEHIND PAUL'S TEACHING?

But it may be said, even so, these experiences that Paul recounts suggest many questions which need an answer. Must he not have had in his mind some scheme or system, to have written these things? Notwithstanding the great facts of Christ's history which were in his mind, Paul did not give a systematic account of the objective beliefs behind his experiences. The systems which are called Pauline have rarely more right to the name than St. Albans Cathedral has to be called Roman because a number of Roman bricks are to be found in the tower. The plan of salvation, founded on theories of the relations of the persons of the Trinity, may have some, but only a faint, relevance to what St. Paul taught. Systems founded on undemonstrable speculations about God and man, whether

true or false, even when coloured by Pauline words, are not Paul's theories.

Explanations of certain facts are no doubt implied by his words. The crucifixion demanded explanation. To men of Paul's age it seemed preposterous that a man who claimed to be Messiah should die so shameful a death. The fact of such a death made the claim of Messiahship seem ludicrous or blasphemous. That was Paul's own earlier opinion. But when he came into vital contact with the risen Christ and knew that the Messiah was Jesus, he saw that the crucifixion, instead of being disgraceful, was glorious. He realized that it was the deepest expression of God's self-renouncing love which could be imagined, and that there could be no explanation of it but that which the early disciples quoted as the very word of the Crucified, that 'He gave His life a ransom.' But Paul did not discuss to whom the ransom was given, and like questions. In Rom. iii. 24 his words are nearer to a theory of atonement than elsewhere, but, even there, the theory derived that Christ was a propitiatory sacrifice to an angry God—the simplest to derive, if the word propitiation has all the meaning in it that it sometimes had—is one which, as has been pointed out, cannot be supported by his other sayings, and, indeed, cannot be harmonized with 'God was in Christ reconciling.' It seems, on the other hand, to be contradicted by them.

From the earliest days of his Christian life, Paul must have regarded the death of Christ as having some relation to sin. Can we think that he had in his own mind no systemized conception of the grounds of the grace of God? The answer is that, while Paul does not set forth a systematic doctrine of the Atonement, he must have had grounds for his beliefs, which were clear to him, though not so clear to us; but they are, perhaps, more likely to have been a series of intuitive convictions than a reasoned system. All that we can do is to collect such facts of experience, and such beliefs as he gave

expression to, always taking care not to divorce his sayings from his experience nor to turn his metaphors into logical propositions.

The facts of experience have been set down in this volume : his filial sense of gratitude to God, his realization that he was reconciled to God, his sense of the infinite love of God in Christ who is the crucified, which come to him through the whole obedience of Christ to God, through His life of humiliation, but particularly in His death and passion on the tree. He found the power of God to salvation from sin in the Crucified ; and, by means of his union with Christ, who had died on the cross, Paul was himself crucified and yet lived, or, rather, Christ lived in him.

It is clear that he discovered, in and through his experience of Christ, that ' God revealed His Son in him,' and that, in union with Christ—in companionship with that Son—he cried, ' Abba, Father,' because he knew that Son was his own brother and co-heir. He held certain beliefs about Jesus Christ, partly experimental, partly confirmed by his experience, or so congruous with it, that they raised no questions in his mind. He believed that Christ existed before His earthly career began, and that His life on earth was a great self-sacrifice. Being in the form of God, He emptied Himself and became a servant obedient unto death, the ' death of the cross.' His life and death were a gift to men, and thus a sacrifice on their behalf. ' Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.' But so far from being a forced sacrifice to propitiate God, ' God sent Him forth,' and was in Him reconciling the world to Himself. That is to say, he believed both that Christ gave Himself and that His Father gave Christ. The words of St. John's Gospel, ' God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,' express Paul's views. Father and Son alike sacrificed and gave. The two sacrifices were one act of divine love. No view which finds bargaining between Father and Son, or between eternal justice and mercy, has any support from

Paul. Paul believed that this gift had a definite relation to man's sin and salvation. 'He gave Himself for me.' He believed that Christ's life and death were a real historical invasion of the world by love, 'that we might be reconciled to God, and that God's own love was commended to us in that death . . . and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' He believed that love, which he describes as the weakness of God, was stronger than men. Paul believed also that Christ's identification with men made a difference to their sin. 'Made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 'God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh.' His identity with the race may have been illuminated for him by the words of Isaiah about the suffering servant; it probably was. And that God was afflicted in our affliction is true history, if '*God* really was in Christ,' for thus He so became one with the human race, that He could not but bear its sins. But Paul formulated no systematic doctrine of the vicarious suffering of Christ, true as we believe that doctrine to be.

Furthermore, Paul saw in the Cross the supreme manifestation of God's love, and saw it not merely as a manifestation but as a power to salvation. He felt the Cross was not only a declaration of love but a demonstration of righteousness. It was not only the instrument of God's pardoning love but the declaration of the fact that God Himself was just. The Cross, as Rom. iii. 26 shows, was judgement as well as mercy. The sins of man were condemned by the death of Christ. If God in Christ must suffer death, because men cannot endure incarnate goodness, the Cross means judgement, and the righteousness of God is set forth by a love so great that it dies, rather than not save. Paul believed that the Cross secured a forgiveness which was not condonation, a pardon very different from that which Shakespeare calls 'Foul redemption.' Jesus the crucified not only remitted men's sins, but saved

men from sin. He died for our justification that He might save us by His life.

It must be admitted that Paul, a man of restless intellect, could hardly have been satisfied with his own happy experiences in Christ 'who is the crucified,' without asking penetrating questions as to why it was necessary for Jesus to die for our sins, and without searching for solution in his reflections on the character of God, the sin of man and the historical facts of Christianity. Paul's characteristic word is 'Christ died for our sins,' and he meant, almost certainly, 'on our behalf.' It is sometimes said that the only fact we can rely upon is the bare historical truth that Christ was crucified, and phrases like 'died *for our sins*' are interpretation. Can that view be maintained except by assuming that our Lord's own words, 'a ransom for many,' are a reflection of later thought? But that is a sheer *petitio principii*. What evidence there is goes to show that there never was a time when Christians thought otherwise of the death of Christ than that it was for sin. Such a view must have been derived from words of Jesus. The account Paul gave, at so early a date, of the meaning of the Lord's Supper would confirm this view if such confirmation were necessary.

Have we therefore no data, if Paul did not systemize his own beliefs, for a doctrine of the Atonement? Cannot we sum up his thoughts in such a way as to justify us in stating Paul's doctrine of the Atonement? The beliefs and experiences of Paul would no doubt be a contribution, perhaps the most important one, to a satisfactory doctrine of the Atonement, but that Paul thought of a dogma of the kind of those which have been formulated is unlikely. If Paul can be said to have formulated a dogma, it was rather the comprehensive doctrine of salvation by grace than a special doctrine of the Atonement. It is perilous to differentiate between the experiences of Paul of the saving power of his crucified and living Saviour and the objective grounds behind those experiences.

Hence it seems to be desirable to interpret the above quoted affirmations about the work of Christ for man's salvation in relation to and even as part of, and not in detachment from, his doctrines of grace. Cannot their meaning be best seen in their relation to the divine family? Are they not to be explained, as was the doctrine of justification, by the family ethic? Let it be noted that we say the divine family, rather than the Fatherhood of God. The Fatherhood of God is a wide enough term, if it is thought of as including the family implied, but, in point of fact, the family is often overlooked. God's Fatherhood is too often regarded as a mere paternal relationship between God and an individual man, which, of course, misses a most important value of the name Father. God is not *my* Father exclusively, but *our* Father, as Jesus taught us to say. Paul arrived at his experience of Fatherhood, not as an individual, but in co-partnership with Jesus, God's first-born, who was Paul's elder brother. He only came to the Father in the Son, in whom the Father was revealed, and through whose spirit he cried 'Abba, Father.' Hence references to the Father always imply references to the family. It is through the divine family, in which all men share, at least potentially, and in which Jesus is the first-born, that we discover the rational justification, both of Paul's filial experience and of the so-called objective facts of redeeming grace.

Dr. W. F. Lofthouse, in a recent article on the Atonement, has given a succinct and most illuminating summary of the two main groups of doctrines of the Atonement in the following words :

'Either they tell us God rightly demands something from us which we have refused, and that we must, therefore, make (directly, which is impossible, or indirectly through Christ) the due reparation, or they tell us God desires only one thing, the love of our poor hearts ; and that He sent Jesus to make that complete devotion possible and natural.'

And he comments further, that in the first group of theories some 'punishment to make up for disobedience is essential,' and, in the second, 'punishment, if thought of at all, will be subordinate to the return of the Prodigal to the Father's house.'

If, however, our view of the Judgement Hall and the Home, of the Judge and the Father, is correct, it is not difficult to express Paul's doctrine in words culled from Dr. Lofthouse's description of both groups of theories. May we not write: 'Paul tells us that God might rightly demand something from us which we have refused, and that we are under obligation to make the due reparation. But his experience of God in Christ assures him that, nevertheless, God desires from us only one thing, the love of our worthless hearts, and that He sent Jesus to make that complete devotion possible and natural'?

It is difficult to deny that Paul thought that God's laws make demands on us which we cannot obey. Rom. vii. surely shows that. But that some *punishment* is essential to make up for our disobedience was never stated by Paul, unless, indeed, a very questionable interpretation is given to one passage, Rom. iii. It is a deduction made by the theologian. Christ did, in fact, die for sins not His own. To suggest that He was actively punished by God is certainly to go beyond the words, to say nothing of the meaning, of Scripture, but, if Jesus really was the Son of God, He certainly did suffer by living amongst men and by His shameful death. This may be described as caused by the Eternal Law of Righteousness. That is to say, in the nature of things—God's nature of things—perfect innocence could not be identified with sinful humanity without suffering. And just as the suffering of unselfish goodness, e.g. a mother's suffering for a ne'er-do-well, is the most redemptive thing on earth, so much more must the suffering of the perfect innocence of Christ have been redemptive.

To discuss what that suffering on behalf of us men involves,

and what suffering of ours it remits, is to enter into a maze of speculations of dubious value, in which theologians have been repeatedly lost. What seems clear is, according to Paul, that, however much we owe, God will not demand the payment of our debt any more than the master in the parable demanded payment from his debt-laden servant. And the reason is that God is our Father, who judges not by the standards of the law court but by the standards of the family. God does not demand reparation from those who trust Jesus. It is not sufficient to say the reason is because Jesus died, Jesus paid it all. Symbolical ransom-language may be misleading at this point. The analogy of a soul which feels its debts are cancelled, and therefore speaks of ransom, is sometimes pressed beyond its clear significance. One reason that God does not require reparation from those who trust Jesus is that life has been re-created by their trust, and they realize they are no longer under law but under grace. When men return to their Father, as Paul or the Prodigal Son returned, they receive what they do not expect, because they are thinking in the terms of bonds, contract, and reparations, instead of the spirit and ethic of the home. The realization that Jesus is a common Son with them, of one Father, alters the whole meaning of life to them. They have no condemnation, and they cry conjointly with the Son of God, 'Our Father.' Their lives have simply been re-created by the amazing love of Christ in which they have trusted. This does not mean a repudiation of morality, it means the entrance into a higher morality—the morality of the human family. The relation of brother to brother, of child to parent, always has been higher than in any other realm of human life. The Fatherhood of God is often enough taught sentimentally, but any one who really believes in it, and practises it in its family implications, has obviously stepped on to a higher platform of righteousness than that of the street and market.

People of the average type who lie to each other, cheat each other, overreach each other in the world, as a rule do not do so in their own homes. War has often enough been regarded as heroic, but stories like that of Sohrab and Rustum, brothers fighting each other, have always been considered tragical. To belong to God's family and to live on the family level is to justify love—God's love to man. Why trouble about reparation when experiencing regeneration into a new order of life, where men love their Father and His children? Let a man have such a faith as this in God's grace, in the reality of God's pardon, in the meaning of the divine family, and abstract laws of righteousness and juridical methods of thought about God will vanish as quickly as they vanished from Paul when, liberated from thralldom, he cried, 'No condemnation,' and had the courage to 'forget the things which were behind.' Moreover, it must be remembered that Paul's entrance to his Father's house was *in* Christ Jesus, that is to say, in union, fellowship, and common fraternity with Christ. Apart from that union he would not have dared to say Father. Such a union involved the living out of Christ's life again in his own. It involved crucifixion with Christ, resurrection with Christ, so that he reckoned himself dead to sin and crucified to the world. It involved the elevation of his whole moral life to another platform—risen in Christ; he sat in heavenly places. Any man, however corrupt or helpless, whose soul is so quickened into a higher life that he becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus, justifies the morality of the ways of God, and reveals the fact that the true relation of a man to God is not that of a slave to his master, but of a child in a family to his father.

Now all this Paul learnt in the Cross, or, rather, in the risen, life-giving Christ 'who is the crucified.' In the Son revealed in Him, he found the Father, and in the love of that Son, particularly as it was poured out on the cross, he found the Father's heart; that was his discovery, as it was John's

when he said, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.' It would, perhaps, be truer to say that the love of God in Christ found him, apprehended him, than that he found it. For that love was the power of God to salvation. Paul was sought and saved by one who came to seek the lost, whose supreme searching and saving is that 'lifting up which draws all men' to His feet. Such love, which revealed God to Paul as Father when he merely thought of Him as judge, drew him out of a world in which he thought of nothing but his failures. Christ's love did more than reveal—it was the elder brother's love, which brought Paul the wanderer home. The Cross meant that He sought and saved the lost. It cancelled debts, delivered him from prison, redeemed him from slavery, gave him reconciliation and peace where he had been struggling ineffectively, put him right with God, made him realize his true filial relation to his Father, as it will all men who have faith to trust it without reserve, and to say,

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

Now the love of the pardoning Father, mediated by the Son of His love, was not condonation of sins. The fact that the love of God was so great that Jesus, identifying Himself with men, condemned sin in the flesh, makes sin appear to be sin. Sin is not treated lightly by a father because he forgives it, and a father's pain hurts the loving child more than the stripes administered by a judge. Repeated forgiveness humiliates the pardoned more than any punishment. God is just when He justifies, because He is a Father and not because He is a judge. Paul's words and beliefs about the Cross and the Crucified, about the Son and the Father, about Christ's death for his sins, and his care that the moral order should not be transgressed by 'foul redemption' are all significant, as we think, of the objective

grounds of his belief, in relation to his subjective experience, as part of his great doctrine of grace, which is the doctrine of a divine family.

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Little attention need be paid to Paul's other doctrines in the Epistle to the Romans. Chaps. iv., ix., and xi. all deal with his desire to harmonize his gospel with the Old Testament. He has no difficulty in showing that Abraham's faith in God's promise was chronologically earlier than his circumcision. He gives the word faith a different value in this chapter, but still is quite successful in showing that God's method of dealing with men, before the days of Jewish ritual began, was more analogous to his own teaching than to that of the Jewish rabbis. In chaps. ix.-xi. he considers the effect of the new gospel on Jewish privileges and nationality, and enters into far-reaching speculations about the nature of God on which to base his arguments, which, whether true or not, are outside the range of verification by experience. Reference will be made to this in a later chapter.

In chap. v. he makes his famous comparison of Adam with Christ, used again in 1 Cor. xv. for a different purpose, which does not concern us here. But his view of the evil of human nature does not really depend in the least on his opinion about Adam, it is the result of his own bitter experience of himself (Rom. vii.) and his general observation of mankind (chaps. i. and ii.). Adam is only an illustration. The passage comparing the two orders of Adam and Christ is one of great beauty, and, many think, of deep significance, but it is, at best, illustrative in character and not experimental, and, whatever its value, it is beyond the range of our inquiry. Matthew Arnold's observations on this passage are just and illuminating.

One may note, in passing, that Paul's eschatological views in his earlier epistles are, whether true or not, open to the

same criticism that they cannot be verified. It is important, when considering Paul's doctrine, to make a distinction between their experimental and speculative element. This does not mean that there is nothing to be learnt from Paul's speculations; quite the contrary. Paul was in union with Christ, and possessed His mind, which makes it even more worthy of note that, when giving his own judgement, he sometimes quite plainly said he was not speaking under inspiration. But some of Paul's speculations, about the Jewish question for instance, whether true or false, cannot be related to experience, while his more valuable practical teaching can. And what is of verifiable value in the teaching of Paul is his doctrines of salvation, largely drawn, as has been shown, from his personal experience of religion. They can be verified, and have been verified, and they are, even if unsystematized by the apostle, literally words of life.

XIV

PAUL AND THE MODERN MAN

HAS Paul a message for the modern man? The negative reply is perhaps less confident to-day than it was a few years since. Important new books are being published on Paul every year, which show that he still interests a great public. But it may be admitted that Paul has no message to many modern men, and to the 'once born' type he would probably say, quoting words of Jesus recorded by John, 'Ye must be born again.' Paul has no message for the modern man, if by the modern man is meant the person to whom regeneration is out of date, and culture and self-expression all that is needed. Paul's message unquestionably is one to despairing people. His gospel is a response to the wretched man who cries, 'Who shall deliver me?' These may be criminals and outcasts, or Luthers and Bunyans—good men whose vision of goodness is so high that they classify themselves with criminals and outcasts. The man who is humiliated by his unconquered and unconquerable passions still finds life and hope in St. Paul's gospel. But no one will understand Paul who does not realize that his message is written to despairing man, and that it is the power of God to salvation. By his message in the above words I mean his positive proclamation of what the Christian gospel means—what he calls 'my gospel.' The Epistle to the Romans, which sets it forth much more plainly than his other writings, is simply unintelligible to men who are not penitent in spirit. A man who, having read the first two chapters of the letter, comes to the conclusion that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' is a mere theological formula, without

point for him, may as well lay the book aside—it will have no positive meaning for him. Of what use, then, is it to an age that is not worrying about sin? Of no use at all, unless, perchance, it should make men ask again whether sin is not, after all, a thing to worry about.

For here, of course, Paul has a message for an age which does not wish to hear it—a terrible message of judgement. The scathing criticism of Pagan society and Jewish moral failure in Rom. i. and ii., confirmed as it is by searching analysis of human personality—Rom. vii.—may be found again to be true, if men give heed. And perhaps they will see analogies between modern Western society and that described in Rom. i., which cannot be ignored. How would Paul describe the mentality of a famous British philosopher who criticizes Christian morality *because* it put down fornication? What would Paul say of a brilliant book of 1929 which gives a picture of the more or less promiscuous concubinage of a small group of men and women, and defends it, suggesting that free sex relations of such a kind really express the moral ideas of our day in reaction from repressive Victorian Puritanism, and hints at darker things, if not with approval, at least with broad-minded tolerance? What the reviewers say of the book is, 'It dares to say things which have been repressed by those who value sophistication and the genteel tradition more than they do their own integrity,' or 'A big book, and commendably indiscreet.' What would Paul say if he found a society in which such immorality was not only practised, but tolerated, and even sanctioned? One turns to the Epistle to the Romans and reads, 'For the wrath of God from heaven is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of man. . . . Because that, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks: but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. . . . Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness that their bodies should be

dishonoured among themselves. For this cause God gave them up to vile passions. And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a *reprobate mind* to do those things which are not fitting.'

Does this mean that the reprobate mind, expressing itself in the beastliness of much of our modern fiction, has already come to England? Fiction is, after all, one of the best mirrors of the period which produces it. The reprobate mind is God's judgement on men who, being vain in their own reasonings, ignore God. The reprobate mind is God's most terrible judgement, but can it be said to have fallen yet on England? Such a message was fitting for that hard Pagan world 'where tyranny and sated lust made human life a hell.' But the modern mind is not vain in its reasonings. Has it not created wireless and aeroplanes, and have not its discoveries enriched the secular life of men and created a larger sum of human happiness than this world has known hitherto? It has forgotten God; it is true it prefers the motor-car to the church and does not brood over the soul—but its grip of scientific fact brightens the future of the world with hope, and it does not mean that the age is evil because it is not haunted by the moral taboos of darker times. So one questions, and then one has a nightmare, and remembers that this age has been guilty of the most horrible war of human history, in which millions of the young men of all nations were slaughtered ruthlessly by barbarous weapons which only the modern mentality was capable of forging. The beast rose from the abyss of human personality, broke the brittle chain whereby civilization held him down, and men were driven by lust of blood to do foul things to one another, with the result that all nations were impoverished and the stability of civilization menaced. Was this the judgement of God?

Paul's message to this age is, 'God gives up men who forget Him to a reprobate mind.' His gospel will not be received by the age, or by the men of it, until his message

of judgement is accepted. For Paul's gospel is a gospel for despairing men who mourn the sins which have caused them to fall short of the glory of God. An age, supremely interested in the glory of man, tends to forget God, and, consequently, as life and literature show us to-day, is falling into a 'reprobate mind.'

No doubt readers will say that this is mere one-sided Puritan pessimism, which generalizes too much from a particular book and a few scandals, and ignores the fact that the vast mass of mankind live wholesome lives. There is point in the criticism, but it is interesting to notice that Dill, speaking of the Pagan society of the first century, warns people not to take the satires of Petronius too seriously. If there was a Nero there was a Seneca, if the filthy immoral pictures of Pompeii even to-day reveal the beastliness of the age, there were men like Plutarch and Pliny, and even in our times, if there are features which might justify the condemnation passed by decent men, there are millions of decent men who are the real soul of the world. But does not that miss the point? The Apostle Paul condemned the Roman world, notwithstanding the good elements in it, which, in point of fact, he admired,¹ because of the tolerated bestiality of the time, and, whether right or wrong, would he not find cause to show that our God-forgetting age, in the proportion of its God-forgetfulness, is being given up to the reprobate mind? Paul's general principle is *true*, namely, that to ignore God, whatever man's skill or wisdom, means, ultimately, that His judgement will descend, and that there is no hell so terrible as the *reprobate mind*, which already characterizes not a little of the tolerated literature of our day.

But it must be admitted that our age, despite the judgements of God upon it, which it is too blind to interpret, is not a despairing age. It is buoyed up by the glory of men's achievements in the past and its hope for their development in the future. But it may be suggested that on the secular

¹ Rom. ii. 14-15.

side, the Mediterranean world of the first century had relatively little to complain of, although perhaps it felt the need of religion more than we do. Paul soon gave up appealing to the mighty and the wise, and sowed his seed of life among slaves and wherever despair dwelt. Perhaps in any age it is best for Christianity to trouble little about the age and much about needy people, to whom the gospel always comes with power when it is sought for, and through them influences the world. God has so many times confounded the wisdom of this world with the witness of the weak that it is hardly unreasonable to suggest that He may do so again.

But if Paul's teaching is regarded from another standpoint, that of the modern Church rather than that of the modern world, has it any special significance? It must be admitted that Paul has had to be liberated in our time from the prison of Paulinism, in which the Protestant Fathers had incarcerated him—and the reaction against Paulinism has hardly spent itself in the Church. But the books which continue to be published about Paul, particularly in recent years about the human Paul—such as those of Deissmann, T. R. Berry, Foakes Jackson, Dean Inge, Ramsay, T. R. Glover, Percy Gardner, and many others—suggest that the interest of the Church in him is reviving, even if it is rather in the man than in the thinker. But the direct influence of Paul's writings on the Church has tended to be intermittent. It is unnecessary to discuss his indirect influence in the very structure of the Catholic Church, of which the ideal, however imperfectly realized, seems to have been that of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Harnack said that nobody in early Christianity before Augustine understood Paul except Marcion, and that he misunderstood him. The men who have understood Paul have always been men who experienced his gospel, perhaps the most influential of whom were Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, and the Wesleys. It is noteworthy that the men who have

preached most effectively the Pauline gospel should have been persons whose conversion experiences were all vivid illustrations of deliverance from despair. What is also notable, at least in Protestantism, is that the Gospel of Revival has always been the Pauline Gospel. But Paul's influence has been intermittent. Revivals in the nature of the case are intermittent, and when there is a genuine renewal of life, recreating the Church, the immediate access to Christ, of which Paul is the great witness, is the only way. Such a movement is overdue in the modern Church—and Paul's message may well prove to be the dynamic needed.

But, it may be asked, why should this message not be of more continuous power? Well, it needs experience. It is only captured by experience. It is a message for despairing men who trust God with desperate whole-heartedness. Apart from experience it always will be a dangerous message. It cannot be taught effectively as doctrine by ordinary didactic methods. There have been flat periods in Church history, when men could not abide a religion which makes such tremendous demands on renunciation and faith. The Church institution is often an ecclesiastical organization of religion for ordinary people, and Paul's gospel, although it is a gospel for ordinary people, makes extraordinary demands on them, which Church organizations find difficult to put into practice. People talk to-day as if Paul's religion of faith were unethical. The truth, of course, is that it is super-ethical, and makes demands for a whole-hearted renunciation of self and devotion to Christ, quite out of the range of vision of non-experiencing Christians. 'But, after all, is this higher morality of Paul,' it may be asked, 'possible or desirable to-day?' Is it necessary to salvation? Is it not better for ordinary people to do the best they can, and not be righteous overmuch, nor wicked overmuch? 'Let us communicate,' we may imagine them saying, 'at least three times a year, and become representatives to the Methodist

Conference. Let us live respectable lives, and try to be as charitable as we can to deserving people, whom we know to be in need, and tolerant to the opinions and views of others ! After all, the wholesome life of people who do no particular harm, and in an unostentatious way do a bit of good without fuss or profession, does keep the world clean.' Who does not know it, and who is not thankful for it ? But is it enough ? Can we sit down to this deliberate cultivation of moral mediocrity ? Is not the world really wrong at the centre ? Is there nothing in religion—extreme religion of Paul's type ? Can we really be content with a world such as that described above, on which the marks of what Paul calls the Judgement of God are so plainly stamped ? No ! we need in our age, as the world has rarely needed it, the mighty, personal, and social gospel of the great Apostle. But if it is true that Paul's is a message for despairing men and that it is based on conviction of sin ought we not, in spite of Sir Oliver Lodge, to worry about our sins ? We certainly must if Paul is to be of any use to us. And have we no need to do so in an age where there are so many indications of the reprobate mind ? But many people say that the difficulty of Paul's teaching is that his doctrine of sin and redemption is based on an exploded view of the history of mankind—the sins of Adam being of no interest to people who do not believe in the historical character of Adam on the one hand, and who hold the modern scientific views of evolution on the other. This difficulty, of course, is really founded on errors of interpretation. *It is not true that Paul's doctrine of the sinfulness of human nature is founded on the story of Adam. No careful and unprejudiced reading of his letter can justify such a conclusion.* Paul's view of human nature is founded, as has been said, on his own observation of other men, and particularly of himself, and if Rom. v. (12-20) had never been written, his main argument would have remained exactly the same. From a literary point of view the passage is of secondary value, and,

theologically, it is a series of contrasts between the new humanity and the old, in which the enrichment of all men by Jesus is illustrated. If Paul had had any doubt about the historical existence of Adam, it is questionable whether he would have made his comparison between Adam and Christ, but whether Adam is fact or fiction makes no difference to the affirmation that where sin abounds grace doth much more abound, nor to the essential meaning of the passage. What is more important to remember is that the illustration of Adam had no influence whatever upon Paul's conviction that all had sinned and come short of the glory of God, and a false exegesis of the epistle underlies the statement that Paul's doctrines of sin and redemption must be rejected because they were built up upon his views of Adam.

Still, it may be admitted, altogether apart from Paul's use of Adam, that the doctrine of evolution has greatly influenced modern thinkers on the meaning of human nature, and that the conception of rising humanity is a different conception from that of fallen humanity. That is to say, the pre-evolution idea of man was that he needed restoration to the perfect humanity of Adam as he came from the hands of God, and that he must get rid of the foulness which besmirched his humanity; but the evolutionary idea is not that a man has to get rid of evils which befoul him, so much as that his is a progressive humanity which will continue to grow to heights far beyond our present vision until perhaps it reaches supermanhood. In a word, the human ideal is 'putting on,' evolving, developing, claiming the future. But surely here Paul is helpful. He would have us put on the new man as much as put off the old: but he realizes that, in man himself as he is, there must be struggle, whatever be the explanation of the struggle, which must be ended by victory, before the highest development is possible. But the highest development is the ideal of his life, and the goal of his striving is the image of Christ, the second Adam,

which is a higher human ideal than secular scientists have yet imagined.

Now it is at this point, perhaps, that the Church can most directly get help from Paul. Paul has been too much quoted in his references to deliverance from actual sin and too little followed in his inculcation of a higher Christian life, with its positive content of Christian virtue. But the man who lacks the effective characteristics of Christ is as much a sinner needing salvation as the man who commits adultery or robs widows' houses. Sin according to Paul means 'coming short of the glory of God.' It is defect, debt, but Christ, indeed, forgives not only for trespasses but for defects. The great place for penitence in the Church is not so much for the positive evil that it does, as for its defects of love. Jesus emphasized the judgement of God in this relation more than in any other—'to do it not'¹ places a man on the left hand of Christ in the Day of Judgement. In our own age the judgement of God which the Church needs most to dread is that against the lovelessness which so often makes her antisocial and indifferent to the very community of which she is to be the light. She is to be 'the City set on a hill which cannot be hid.'² The Church ought to be in despair to-day.

It is not the Church's optimism but British phlegm which saves the British Church from bitter humiliation. The masses of the people are outside the walls of the Church, and the Church sits in self-complacency, fiddling with internal problems and patchwork solutions, often entirely indifferent to the masses for whom Christ died. Many Churches know that they have utterly failed to influence their local communities, and with a self-complacent tone say, Yes, our Church has gone down, but the moral standard of the people has gone up. Do such people ever read modern fiction? The wits of the Church are not keen enough to compete with modern purveyors of Sunday amusement!

¹ Matt. xxv. 45.

² Matt. v. 14.

As long as the Church is self-complacent, and can keep herself together by business methods, she will trust not in God but in her ecclesiastical cleverness, but the day of despair must come. Then men's necessity may be God's opportunity. And the sooner it comes the better. Churches and men, society and individuals, stand in need of conviction of *sin*: that is the fundamental need of our times. Who shall deliver us? Paul tells us!

PART V

PAUL'S EXPERIMENTAL DOCTRINE
(SOCIAL)

XV

A SOCIAL OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

WHILE many facts in his outward life may be said to have shaped the doctrines of St. Paul, nothing external can have influenced them more profoundly than his controversies with the Jews on the Law and on Circumcision. His Jewish upbringing, in which he took a pride, must have made it difficult for him to count 'but dung' much of his national inheritance. It has been shown in previous chapters how the Torah was reflected in Paul's own consciousness, and how the ethical problem made itself felt when he, although a consciously sinful man, entered into the joyous experience of God's pardoning grace. Paul found in his own experience of filial relationship to God through fraternal relationship with God's Son a solution of the problem, and so formulated his doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

But he had another problem, the national one, which arose through his rejection of circumcision as a necessary part of the Christian life. He discovered that converted pagans made as good Christians, without first becoming Jews, as converted Jews. He claimed for his converts all the privileges of the gospel, and by so doing, not unnaturally set the Jews against him. They saw in him an enemy of their nation and a traitor to his and their ancestral heritage. Just as the witness of Cornelius¹ made Peter see that baptism—i.e. reception into the Christian community—could not be refused to a man who obviously enjoyed the Christian experience, so Paul's converts and Paul had the courage to say

¹ Acts x. 47.

that Christianity must not be saddled with the incubus of Jewish nationality. But Paul was able to see from the Jewish standpoint, and always showed willingness to accommodate himself to it if he could do so without compromise of principle. He had been brought up to believe that he was a child of a chosen people, and never ceased to hold that God had selected Israel from amongst the nations as the people of privilege, but the clash of this view with his conviction that Jesus was also the Light of the Gentiles, precipitated a problem which was always with him.

He did what he could to heal the wounds his gospel inflicted on Jewish sensitiveness by his efforts to raise money for the Jewish poor from Gentile churches, and it is perhaps significant that the collection was occupying his mind at the very time he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. The Jewish question was always in his mind when he was writing that book, which more than any of his writings, except perhaps his letter to the Galatians, laid the foundation of a world-wide gospel. Chapters ix.-xi. reveal his fear that his doctrine of Gentile liberty was erecting a fresh barrier against the conversion of the Jewish nation ; for a universal gospel was difficult to harmonize with the Jewish belief in the exclusive privileges of the ' People of God.' The mental anguish which he suffered is witnessed by these chapters in which he struggles towards a solution of the problem. ' A disobedient and gainsaying people ' it is, as the prophet had foretold. And yet the gifts and the calling of God are never revoked. ' God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew.' Few of Paul's conclusions were more divorced from his personal religious experience than the speculations of Rom. ix.-xi., and their value is not easy for non-Jewish people to assess. Unfortunately, the Apostle's speculations have been attractive to speculative minds, and dogmas have been formulated, particularly by the Calvinist thinkers, more and more distant from Christian experiences. Some of these dogmas have not been less cruel

than the tortures of the Inquisition. They have caused as much pain to sensitive minds as racks and thumbscrews did to sensitive bodies.

When Paul returned to the subject of Jewish nationalism in the Epistle to the Ephesians it was from another point of view. While he writes to the Gentiles as a Jew—'*We* Jews, *you* Gentiles,' he says—he seems to be liberated from the Jewish complex of which there are so many signs in the Epistle to the Romans. There never was a more conscious citizen of heaven than Paul when he wrote his letter to the Ephesians. It is both the broadest and the highest treatment of national problems. He integrates the divisive factors of human society in his far-reaching doctrine of a new humanity in Christ Jesus. He writes from a point of view higher than that of party interest, whether Jew or Gentile. He has become a super-patriot. He finds a higher nationality in Christ than that of any nation. He sees the Kingdom of God. This sublime conception, which harmonized all discords—social as well as national—in Christ, issued from Paul's personal experience of Him who is the Crucified and from his reflection on the common experience of the Cross enjoyed by his Gentile converts. Paul discovered early in his Christian ministry how violent was the clash of Christian experience with the claims of Jewish nationalism.

The letter to the Ephesians differs in nothing more strongly from Rom. ix.-xi. than in the closeness of its teachings, and even speculations, to experience. Nothing is clearer than the fact that the doctrine of this little treatise is the fruit of direct and rich experience of God in Christ. It is no part of our purpose to give a detailed exegesis of the Epistle, but rather to extract from it Paul's solution of the Gentile-Jewish problem, and to show how it is the outcome of his personal experience, and that of his readers, of the love of Christ, and particularly of the fact that the God in Christ, who reconciled the world to Himself, also reconciled men to each other in Christ Jesus. Paul, because he was in Christ,

and had so long been in Him, viewed the whole question from the standpoint of Eternity. 'God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing . . . in Christ.' God 'chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.' Dr. Dale claimed that words like these can hardly be called speculations; they were, in themselves, experience. 'There is not a touch of speculation,' he writes, 'in this glorious passage. It was not even necessary that he should appeal to visions and revelations. He was only telling the Ephesian Christian what he had actually seen for himself. That God had blessed him with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, was, with Paul, not a matter of speculation; it was not even a matter of faith; it was a matter of experience. . . . He knew that he was "in Christ." And in this union with Christ, he had found a freedom, a force, a fullness of life, which to him were an assurance that only "in Christ" could man fulfil the divine idea of human perfection and blessedness. . . . It was by no accident that union with Christ exalted and transfigured the whole spiritual nature of man, and raised him to divine levels of life. Man was made for this; before the foundation of the world, God had determined that "in Christ" man should find God and God find him.'¹ And so from this high standpoint Paul reflects on the problem of Jew and Gentile and finds its solution in Christ, and also in the higher synthesis of a new humanity which is Christ Jesus. This is the true value of his comparison of Adam with Christ. Dr. Dale's claim that Paul's far-reaching statements which seem speculative were really expressions of his experience of Christ is true, and it is unfortunate that the Calvinists detached them from experience and made them the basis of their speculative theology.

Paul in this Epistle always keeps close to experience, the warmth of which gives such significance to the great truths

¹ Dale, *Ephesians*, p. 35.

and visions he outlines. But the deep truths of the first chapter are outside the more concrete solution of the national problem with which he has to deal, though never failing to illuminate them as the sun does the earth. While we deal with what we may call the spiritual geography of the writing, we must always keep in mind its spiritual astronomy. Wider questions are hinted at and more directly dealt with in the letter to the Colossians than those with which this chapter will deal.

A careful reading of the letter to the Ephesians will show that, with all its exaltedness of standpoint, it dealt very practically with the human race and the Church. The point to be emphasized is that just as the letter to the Romans solved Paul's ethical problem by the 'family ethic,' so the letter to the Ephesians solves Paul's international problems by the 'family ethic.' 'God,' the Apostle wrote to the Galatians, 'was pleased to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.' Perhaps it may be claimed that the doctrines of the earlier letter show what was inherent in the *conversion* experience of the personal revelation of the Son of God in Paul, and the doctrines of the later what was inherent in the *vocation* experience, whereby he was called to declare that Son of God revealed in him to the Gentiles. It has been noted earlier that Paul's experience of God's fatherhood was in the Son of God, and that his ethic was founded, not merely on the filial relationship, but on the family relationships implied; but the content of this statement becomes clearer in Paul's social doctrines of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the family ethic is worked out with amazing results.

The object of the following chapters is to outline the Apostle's doctrine of God's far-reaching purposes in human society, to show the closeness of his doctrines to human experience, and to maintain that this little treatise, more perhaps than any other teaching of the apostolic age, is a tract for our own times.

While it is not possible to give a detailed outline of the letter, it may be well, first of all, to glance through its contents in a translation such as A. S. Way's, which makes the consecutiveness of its thought very clear, and to distinguish what has been described above as its spiritual geography from its spiritual astronomy, without, however, forgetting their interconnexion. Paul is thinking not only of the heritage and mission of Christians on earth, but of the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. He is thinking of Christ's domination both of earth and heaven, and suggests ways in which men are to serve God on earth, and shadows forth a vision of what the Christian community can be, and perhaps of what the human race may be, in Christ Jesus.

There are passages in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and some of the greatest, which are really not so much the theme of the letter as its background. The question of reconciliation of Jew and Gentile is considered *sub specie aeternitatis*. The united people of God are only a part of that vast unity of which Christ is head. Our theme is the family of God on earth, but, in the first chapter of this letter, Paul gave us a glimpse of an even greater family, when he wrote 'all things are summed up in Christ, the things in heaven and the things upon earth,' but it is in the same Christ in whom we are made a heritage, 'a fore-ordained heritage, fore-ordained as unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.'¹ Francis of Assisi found his fraternity not only in 'brothers minor' but in birds and fishes, and even in the sun and the moon, clear water, and the death of the body. Does this faintly indicate what Paul meant when he spoke of Christ's headship of a family which includes 'all things in heaven and earth'? It is of the lesser family of Christ that we shall think, composed of Jews and Gentiles, 'which also was to the praise of the glory of his grace, freely bestowed in the beloved.'² 'The beloved,' a beautiful name, is illuminated

¹ Eph. i. 5.² Eph. i. 6.

by the parallel passage in Rom. viii., 'the first-born among many brethren.' And this beloved one, though the head of all God's families, is Jesus Christ experienced by the people to whom the Apostle wrote, for it is in Him that they 'enjoy' redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.'

If we may, for the purposes of our thought, separate the Apostle's spiritual geography from his spiritual astronomy, may we not assert that the creation of this holy family of Jews, Gentiles, and their beloved elder brother is the primary object of God's foreseeing grace? It is they who were chosen.² Even in the midst of the starry glory of the first chapter they are defined as being 'to the praise of His glory.' 'Queer little commonwealths of despised and often disreputable people were the culmination of God's plans.'³ We the Jews hoped in the Messiah even before He came; and ye the Gentiles,⁴ who believed in Him when He did come and were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, knew in your hearts that you, together with us, could look forward to a glorious future. We Jews and you Gentiles together have within ourselves the pledge of the inheritance which is to be ours to the praise of God's glory.

And that the Gentiles may really understand the greatness of their calling, 'I, Paul, fall down on my knees,' he says, 'and pray God that yours may be so extraordinary a gift of wisdom and revelation that you may have two great experiences—illumination of heart and empowering of will—that you may know the superlative power which raised Jesus and placed Him above all things in the universe.'⁵

So, having in his first chapter related the Church on earth to the transcendent purposes of God, Paul makes his direct appeal in the second chapter to experience. 'You *hath* He quickened,' as if to say, to this extent you have known

¹ Moffatt.

² Eph. i. 4, 5.

³ Barry, *Paul and Social Psychology*, p. 71.

⁴ Eph. i. 12, 13.

⁵ Eph. i. 15-23.

His power, that it has transformed and reshaped your lives. Contrast that Gentile Paganism with your present exalted Christian experience—a grave of trespasses and sins, a pit of foul corruption in which you lived, with the shining height where now you sit, risen men with a risen Christ in heavenly places! Ponder on a God so rich in mercy and on the grace that you have received from Him by faith.¹ Thus, appealing to the actual liberating experience, he comes to his main theme.

It we were to follow the critical method applied by Matthew Arnold to the Epistle to the Romans we should at least call Eph. ii. 11-22 primary, and perhaps might extend the description as far as to the end of Eph. iv. At all events this passage includes the main subject matter of the letter. It is the solution of the Jewish-Gentile problem. We should not fail to see that this solution was implicit in the common experience of Jew and Gentile of the rich mercy of God, manifested in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Here we should find Paul's social doctrine. For we must not forget, distant and antiquated as differences between Jew and Gentile may seem to us, that Paul is laying down principles which are as true in reference to Catholic and Protestant, Germany and England, man and woman, capital and labour, and all other sectarian and divisive groupings, as they were in reference to Jew and Gentile, the actual sectionalisms with which he was personally acquainted. All sections and parties are reconciled in one body on the Cross.

Paul writes as a Jew who has transcended Judaism, but is still a Jew. He never renounced the belief that the Jews were God's chosen people and that they had received divine privileges by their knowledge of God, not shared by the other people of the world, and surely he was right. But after much heart-burning he has come to see that national privileges are for the 'praise of God's glory,' and not for the gratification of a nation's pride. The Jewish heritage was a

¹ Eph. ii. 1-10.

vocation to make possible the wider service. The insistence on the privilege, rather than the vocation, was the tragedy of Israel which underlay the heart-broken patriotism of his earlier letter to the Romans. But in this later letter he writes as a Jew who is satisfied that the privileges of Jews have not been lost by the gospel for the Gentiles, for he sees that the gospel meant the throwing open of the temple doors that the King of Glory—the Light who lightened the Gentiles—might come in and bring with Him the hosts of the redeemed. It was from that point of view he wrote this letter to the Gentiles, to whose experience of redeeming grace he can so confidently appeal.

The second chapter states the problem. The Jews had been the privileged people, with their possession of divine revelation and their covenanted relation with God. The rest of the world were outcasts from their point of view and even from Paul's. Greek philosophy and Roman civilization were no substitutes for that deeper knowledge of God possessed by the Jewish people. The Jews felt their superiority to the great races of antiquity and were unwilling to share the spiritual treasures which they prized as their peculiar heritage with any other people. Paul does not discuss whether or no this ought to be the case ; all that he does is to state facts. The Gentiles to whom he was writing had no share in the Jewish privileges, and, indeed, as their experience showed, had been living on a lower moral plane, without hope and without God in the world.¹ But now everything was altered by the coming of Jesus, and particularly by God's love in Christ's Cross, which Jew and Gentile alike, when believing, had actually experienced. What did that experience involve? The individual enrichment referred to in the earlier verses of the chapter was the common possession of all Christian people, but there was more in it than the individual reconciliation of a soul to God, precious as that was—' Now in Christ Jesus ye

¹ Eph. ii. 12.

that were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.'¹ But this reconciliation of the Gentiles was not only to God, but to the Jews.² And the special topic with which the Apostle deals is the reconciliation of man to man as fulfilling the divine purpose of those who received the 'adoption of sons through Jesus Christ,'³ who were created into a new family of God.

The Christian Jews, at least in the case of St. Paul, no longer boast their national religious heritage; their new hope like that of the Gentiles is based on a common experience, for through Him we both have access in one spirit unto the Father. A common paternity creates the new family. But the great centre of reconciliation with each other is the Cross, the supreme manifestation of God's dynamic love, and their common experience of its power. The Cross is not only the power of God to personal salvation, but the power of God to social salvation. There God in Christ reconciles men not only to Himself, but also to one another. Here, then, in the following words, is Paul's social doctrine of the Christ 'who is the Crucified.'

'For He is our peace who hath made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: that He might create of the twain one new man [one new humanity], so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body with God through the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and He came and preached peace to you that were far off and to them that were nigh; for through Him we *both* have our access in one spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple

¹ Eph. ii. 13.² Eph. ii. 15.³ Eph. i. 5.

in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the spirit.'¹ The love of God in Christ is the common experience of Jew and Gentile alike. The Cross breaks down the old distinction between privileged and unprivileged because it makes a new humanity. Both Jew and Gentile are fellow citizens of a new kingdom, that is to say, a family in a new household. The temple even belongs no longer to the Jews, the barriers excluding the Gentiles have been burnt down by God's love to all men, and, indeed, the temple of the future is not to be of stone and wood but a living body, although a corporate one. The new family may be described as a living body, because it is to be the dwelling-place of God in the spirit—but it is a temple too, built up on the foundation laid by Jewish apostles and prophets, which foundation is Jesus Christ Himself. Paul, not being a logician but an apostle, mixed to our great advantage his most vivid metaphors.

Paul, having stated his solution of the problem caused by the antagonism between Jew and Gentile, goes on to detail his own work as the apostle of the Gentiles. He does not find it difficult to show that his life mission has consisted in declaring the share of the Gentiles in God's love. The secret of God had only been recently revealed. Paul himself has been specially illuminated. His commission to the world was inherent in his vocation and in his conversion experience. He makes no profession that he, the least of all saints, is more saintly than others, but one unspeakable privilege has been given to him—to make all men see what was their fellowship in the mystery, that is to say, in the hidden love of God only in their own times revealed in Christ as universal so that even the Gentiles were fellow heirs (if sons, then heirs), fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers with the Jews of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. It is true that his enthusiasm

¹ Eph. ii. 14-22.

for his message had caused his imprisonment, so that he was now an ambassador in bonds ; but it was worth while. How deep the emotion of his thanksgiving when he said, ' To me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' And then he relates earth to heaven, spiritual geography to spiritual astronomy, ' that now to principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God.' For the ultimate reason of our sonship through Christ Jesus is that all might be to ' the praise of the glory of God.'¹

Why, then, need any one sympathize with Paul the prisoner, who had been able to fulfil his divine vocation of declaring against all sorts of opposition that Gentiles belonged to the divine family? ' Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you which are your glory.'² So he breaks out again into prayer—prayer for the strengthening of men who have been raised from a grave of sins by divine power, ' that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they, rooted and grounded in love, may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.'³ For just as individuals they had needed power to raise them up, now as a community they need love. ' Follow after love,'⁴ said Paul to the Corinthians, who were talking much about gifts and rights, ' Follow after love.' The only way in which the new family of God could successfully transcend nationality was by loving Christ, having Christ in its heart, and by learning the meaning of love. The meaning of love can only be learned by those who practise it—who ' are rooted and grounded in love.' The fellowship of Christians is the fellowship of a family which can only accomplish the purposes of God in the family spirit—love. And thus we come to Paul's doctrine of the Church—of the super-national, super-class, super-sex, super-sectional family of God. That

¹ Eph. iii. 1-13.² Eph. iii. 13.³ Eph. iii. 18, 19.⁴ Cor. xiv. 1.

family of men and women who have said 'Abba, Father' to God through His Son, 'the beloved, the first-born of all creation, and the first-born of many brethren.' The Church is a community of men with a common experience of one Father through their common experience of one brother who loved them and gave Himself for them, thus commending to them His father's love. How is the family to live as a family, to develop its experience, and live out not only its personal but common life? The question is answered in the fourth chapter of this letter.

All that need be noted at this point is Paul's appeal to the new family to observe the family ethic. The community is to come before the individual. The spirit emphasized is one of personal suppression and forbearance for the good of the family, 'forbearing one another in love.'¹ All diligence must be given to 'keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.'² It is vitally necessary that they should emphasize their common possession, *one* hope, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all.* The hope of the future is the realization of Christians that they are one family. Their individual gifts which Christ descended again in the spirit to give to them are varied, so that different men have different functions and offices in the Church, but they are given for the building up of the body of Christ, not for the gratification of individuals, but in order that the ideal of unity may be realized, 'until we all attain [all together, Paul means] unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' The body of Christ, that is, must be as adult as He is—a single full-grown man. The clash of opinion about new doctrine is just a childish practice, which the Church must outgrow. Even when truth has to be declared it must be spoken in love. But, after all, it is growth which they will experience, growth through life which is love, up

¹ Eph. iv. 2.

² Eph. iv. 3.

³ Eph. iv. 4, 5.

to 'the head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body into the building up of itself into love.'¹

The rest of the epistle is occupied with counsels to Gentiles about their moral conduct. As members of such a community they must separate themselves from all things that would taint their character. Heavenly places are to be found in earthly things. In none of Paul's writings are his practical exhortations so rooted and grounded in love, and in none are they so completely orientated to the things of heaven. The family feeling runs through every exhortation. Christians are to be 'imitators of God as dear children,'² their adoption into the Christian family suggests that all Gentiles may enter it—'speak ye truth each one unto his neighbour, for we are all members one of another.'

The family spirit of love must illuminate every human relationship. The Gentiles, Paul says, who have become fellow members of the household of God have entered into a richly privileged life, but their inheritance will assuredly be lost if they follow heathen morality. Let them walk carefully, buying up opportunities for being good and doing good. Let them apply in their domestic life the principles of their religion, but with all their meekness and love they must be strong. The Cross has made peace between contending nationalities, and they are brothers in a great family, but, if they no longer fight each other, let them take upon them the whole armour of God, that they may contend successfully against the principalities and powers of evil which threaten them.

¹ Eph. iv. 15, 16.

² Eph. v. 1.

XVI

THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE FAMILY

I. THE UNITY OF THE FAMILY

It seemed desirable, in setting forth Paul's solution of the Jewish-Gentile problems by his doctrine of the divine family—that is, of the Church—to outline in some fullness the early chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. But that little book is so rich in thought and suggestion that it is easy to wander into other fields of thought than that of Christian experience as creative of Christian doctrine. In our outline, the roots of Paul's doctrine in his experience and that of his readers have been carefully indicated, but now we must confine our attention to the growth of Paul's doctrine from his own experience of God and of life, confirmed, of course, by others, before we examine the content and application of the doctrine.

If the method we pursue seems unnecessarily to restrict inquiry, a little book of a hundred pages, worth its weight in gold, entitled *St. Paul and Social Psychology*, by F. R. Barry, may be heartily recommended. It is valuable not only for its illuminating exposition of the teachings of this Epistle, but for its realization of the striking modernity of those teachings, and for the discriminating judgement and the broad knowledge it shows of modern thought, with which it relates them with such admirable skill, as well as for its noble application of the Pauline doctrine to our current problems. 'Ephesians,' Mr. Barry says, 'is a study of social psychology from the standpoint of Christian experience.' The object of this chapter is to show how Paul's religious experience expressed itself in his theory of

the divine family. Mr. Barry uses the word fellowship rather than family, but perhaps the word family is preferable, because the Christian fellowship is integrated by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the divine family.

To track the growth of Paul's doctrine we need to bear in mind not only his personal experience and that of his converts, of God in Christ, but his personal experience of human life, including his contact with the Roman Empire, and his ever-present controversy with the Jews on their sectional national claims. These facts forced problems on his attention and suggested solutions. It was in the early Christian evangelical experience that the solution was found.

One of Mr. Barry's most graphic chapters is entitled 'The Historical Background'; and it is important to relate Paul to the times in which he lived if we are to catch the significance of his doctrine for our own days. Paul was a citizen of the Roman Empire, and a great traveller in that ancient Mediterranean world. While his letters show little sense of outward things, his missionary journeys record, as Ramsay is never tired of showing, his sense of the importance of the Roman roads and Roman cities as strategic opportunities for the propagation of the gospel. Paul lived in the days of the great Augustan peace. He could not have failed to be impressed with the amazing power of Roman law. The armies of Rome, and, what is more, the just administration of her laws, had secured for little peoples all over the world peace and prosperity such as they had never known. Paul respected the restraining power of the noblest civilization the world had seen. Perhaps he may have admired the manner in which Rome, by causing subject races to take a pride in Roman citizenship, was more than conqueror. He may have noticed that with all her power, founded on justice and tolerance, she longed for a deeper spiritual unity than that of superb organization, and was even then seeking it in empire worship, typified

by the deification of the Roman emperor. Such facts cannot but have impressed the man who walked over her well-made roads and sought the protection, even from his own fellow countrymen, of her just laws. But emperor-worship was as impossible to Paul as to other early Christians, who died rather than submit to it. Something obviously was necessary to give spiritual unity to so great an organization. Where was it to be found?

Did not Paul find it in his own experience and that of his fellow Christians? He taught another kingdom, a heavenly; he knew of armies which had no sword, and a discipline of spirit more potent than that of codes, whether of the Jewish Torah or the Roman law. He knew that heaven had invaded earth in Jesus, who had emptied Himself of all but love, and had been honoured with more than a Roman triumph on a cross, where He trampled with His wounded feet on principalities and powers. The coming of Jesus was the invasion of the world by love. His life was a campaign of love, and His death the spiritual Waterloo where love was triumphant, and the weakness of God proved to be stronger than men. His resurrection showed an apparent defeat to have been the greatest of victories, and His ascension meant that He came again in the Spirit with His gifts, and gathered together into the divine family men endowed with the best gifts, who walked by the more excellent way of love. Here was the solution.

This great gift of the divine love expressed itself in the Cross. The most shameful thing Rome could do to a man was to crucify him. But love faced the shame, and sank into the very depths, then was triumphant, and Paul knew the risen Lord—'who,' he says, 'loved me and gave Himself up for me.' Everything began for him in that personal love, so compulsive, which he realized individually as if it were his alone. But he soon found others who shared his experience, as if it were theirs alone. National distinctions and privileges made no difference. Jew and Gentile alike

were conquered by that love. Jewish sectionalism suggested that, although it might be admitted that Christ's love was for all men, yet men ought at least to be religiously identified with those who had been the chosen people of God, if they were to be received into the divine family. Paul threw all the weight of an intellect, called by F. R. Barry the finest between the time of Aristotle and Michael Angelo, and all the force of a character of unsurpassed power, against a view which placed restrictions on the divine love. How could God in Christ reconcile anything less than a world to Himself in a love like that of the Cross? After long and bitter struggles with privileged separatists, Paul conquered. So great love entered the very Temple, and broke down the barrier wall which cut off from its holy places the Gentiles, and He who 'is the Crucified,' whose love had been experienced by all men who trusted in it, reconciled the parties, Jew and Gentile—which to Paul's mind divided humanity into two—in one body on the tree. It was the Cross, the supreme manifestation of unconquerable love, experienced by diverse men, which slew the enmity between people who, whatever their other divisions, were one in their experience of saving grace. It created a new community of interest amongst divided men, not merely as a human fellowship, but because they were linked together in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, by whom divine love was shed abroad in their hearts, and the Holy Ghost is that very Spirit of God's Son which cried in their hearts, 'Abba, Father!' Thus in unison with the Son of God and each other, saying, 'Abba!' together, they realized they belonged to one divine family.

Now, this new society of men unified by a common experience of redeeming love was composed of all sorts of human beings. This group was created because men found in Jesus a brother in whose Father they saw their father. It was more than a human group, it was a divine family. The Unifier of such a family could unify the human

race. Roman arms and Roman law had created an external unity, but the Empire hankered after some spiritual link, some unifying religious ideal. The best suggestion was the apotheosized emperor! So artificial a religious idea was permanently as impotent as spiritualities produced by organizations always are. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' Something had happened in human history greater than Rome. Divine love had invaded the world and conquered. The subjects of the new Kingdom—the family of God—could unify the race. It might well be that here could be found the manifestation of the sons of God earnestly awaited by all creation. A society higher than nationalities had arisen. Parties and divisions were superseded by this super-society, this divine family. Paul saw what was meant by the Holy Catholic Church. And, notwithstanding its failure, through lack of attention to Paul's counsel about love and morals, the mediaeval conception of a Church above the nations was the noblest dream men ever dreamt, of which the League of Nations is but a pallid shadow. Paul's dream is still unfulfilled, but somehow, in God's own day, the family of God, which unifies all the divisions of humanity, must transcend them all, and the race be made one. This consummation can come when men again go to the Cross, and discover there God's love for themselves—for there is fellowship in the blood of Christ. The world still waits for the revelation of the sons of God. Its greatest need to-day is the divine family.

For, let it be emphatically stated, love—the family spirit—is the method by which the Church is to be built up in unity. The Church of which Paul is thinking is a community of loving people. The prayer of Paul for love, with which he links his statement of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile to his account of the Church, reveals clearly enough what is his feeling as to the need of the Church. The divine family must be rooted and grounded in love, and seek always to

know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. The teaching of Paul in this letter is identical with that in his letter to the Corinthians. He was confronted in the earlier letter with the forces which made for the disintegration of the family. The claim for individual rights, and the difficulties arising from their very gifts of the Spirit, tended to classify Christians into superior and inferior orders, and created a serious problem in the young Church. Paul's argument that all the gifts, even the gifts of the humblest, are of vital importance to the community as a whole, and must therefore be considered in relation to their serviceability to the whole body, and not from the point of view of their relative values to each other, is more fully elaborated in 1 Cor. xii. than in Eph. iv., although not more clearly stated. The gifts of different kinds which the ascended Lord gave to His Church are catalogued in the Ephesian letter, as well as in the Corinthian. The value of a variety of functions is emphasized, but even more the necessity of their subordination for the good of all to the whole community. The family—the Church itself, not the individual—is the unit, and the head—the unifying link—is Christ.

In both letters Paul shows that the one force which can keep the community together is love—the family spirit. The hymn of love (1 Cor. xiii.) is placed in the midst of discussions of Church order (chaps. xii. and xiv.). It is prefaced by the words, 'Yet show I unto you a more excellent way,' and applied by the command 'follow after love.' The superiority of love is enforced by comparisons with learning and eloquence, and love is definitely stated to build up where knowledge puffs up, because the latter, however valuable, tends to individual self-complacency, where the former creates family feeling. And so again in this letter the virtues inculcated are the virtues of love, lowliness, meekness, with long suffering, 'forbearing one another,' he says, 'in love.'

The object Paul sets before the Church is Unity. What he means by this is that the Church is to work with such one-hearted purpose that, though a family, it will act as if it were an individual. With all its variety of gifts, it must have a single objective. The functions are to be so regulated that the individuals are to act like organs of a single body. It is to be one man ; and that man is to have the stature of Christ Himself. So it is to grow up in all things into Him which is the Head, 'even Christ, from whom all the body, fully framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.' The Church—the divine family—built up in love, is to have the value of the body of Christ. The community animated with the one mind is to become as if it were one man.

Now, what it is necessary to emphasize is that this corporate union is to be achieved through love ; but what love ? The answer to this question is of vital importance to a true understanding of the Church, for it is not just a love exercised by one to another at will. It is the love of Christ, a love which in the last analysis is given, not received. Is the term love of Christ, the grammarians used to ask, subjective or objective ? Is it, that is to say, the love I give to Christ, or the love Christ gives to me ? Was it Paul's love to Christ which constrained him, or Christ's love to Paul ? Deissmann states that a new grammatical term, the *genitivus mysticus*, is needed to describe it, the truth being that the phrase implies both Christ's love to us and our love to Christ ; that is true, but it begins in Christ's love to us. We love because He first loved. The very love we give is love poured into us which we give back again. Our love is like the colour of the flower which was painted by the sun. The love which we give is something in which we must have been rooted and grounded. It is not merely the human affection which responds to the divine love. It

is the divine love received and given back again. It is the love discovered in Him who is the crucified, 'who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' It is the common possession of the family of God, the great reality which makes it a family, which must be practised by the family. It is the very life of the Church. Hence we see the overwhelming importance of the prayer that those who had already been rooted and grounded in love should apprehend with all saints (should join in the common experience of all saints) to know the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and thus be filled with all the fullness of God—be full of love, for God is love. And that is possible to Him who can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. The vital necessity for the growth of the family, composed, as it is, of people who have been in antagonism, like Jews and Gentiles, is the love of Christ, the link and life of all who have become one in it. The love men are to give to one another is Christ's love—not merely their own affection, but Christ's love at once possessing them, and their chief possession; and this love, being Christ's love, is His love, not only for the Church, which He purchased with His blood, but, as we shall show later, for the race, for the sake of which he created it in love. But in reference to the Church, the only way to unity is love.

It is significant that the apostle, in outlining the unity to which the Church is to attain, makes very practical suggestions. Paul was a practical mystic, never failing to insist on the ethical implication of his deep religious experiences and his heaven-reaching prayer. He was thinking of men who still had their party attachments even though they had been suppressed by the divine family and the new integration into a super-community, and he emphasizes what unites them: 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism, *one* God the Father of all.' These common possessions were the facts which constituted the new

community, and they must be emphasized, so that the diverse gifts of the Spirit should not disintegrate the community of which the objective was oneness, but that its members might act together like one man who had the stature of Jesus. They were to make Christ as visible to the world as Jesus did in Galilee—not by means of a human body and soul like His, but by means of human fellowship. The ideal of the Church is that Christ shall be as manifested by it as a corporation, or, better, as a united family, as He was by Jesus of Nazareth; and this can be accomplished only by practising the true love which has redeemed us, and which we have received as redeeming grace.

2. THE UNITY OF THE MODERN CHURCH

Then the question may be asked, How does this bear on modern problems of Church union? When appeals are made to separated religious denominations to unite because the Church ought to be one, can these words of Paul be applied? It cannot be said too emphatically that to suggest that the unification of separated religious bodies fulfils Paul's aspiration for union is only to use the words of Paul to express another man's thought, but not to express his own. The view sometimes held, that the governmental unification by a constitution agreed upon by ecclesiastics of different denominations expresses the union to which Paul was exhorting his readers, is infantile and really imperfectly Christian. The union the apostle is thinking of is a union to be achieved by those who are already externally united, not a union to unite them externally. St. Paul is talking to men—Jews and Gentiles—who had found reconciliation in a common experience, who did belong, in the modern sense of the word, to one Church. The word external is perhaps an inappropriate description of their union, or of any union, but it is difficult to find a word which expresses better the outward unification by

ecclesiastical agencies of separate Christian bodies in our own days.

How far, then, can Paul's teaching on union, which was taught as a goal to be reached by what we should now call a united Church, be applied to our modern problem? It is not easy to say; but it is difficult to think that Paul would have been other than sympathetic with movements to give the Church outward union. The broken communion of Christians who claim the same Lord can only be regarded as something foreign to the mind of the great apostle. The outward unification of the Church seems necessary to those who desire to see racial separations in many human departments transcended. And yet the notion that external unification of Christian people is Christian union is very different from Paul's idea. We live under circumstances so far removed from his, and have Church problems so different to face, that it is only at certain points we can be sure of the application of his teaching. The organized Church of our own days, with its bishops and conferences and its long history of secular influence and secular entanglements, with its modern practical problems and its mixed membership, presents difficulties not visualized by the apostle at which he might well have shuddered, as the Christians who followed him have done since.

Would Paul call modern Christian communities Churches? Can they really be thought of as the body of Christ? Is there *one* anywhere which is really the family of God? Cannot the Church which is really the body of Christ be found in all religious communities? Can the term be legitimately identified with any single religious community, or with the totality of them? Are the members in 'the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people,' really incorporated? What would Paul say? The questions are important, but the answers perhaps impossible.

But this much is clear: the Church of early Christianity was the family of God, the men and women gathered from

the world who had received by faith the love of Christ and practised it. They were a social community of men, and lived in a fellowship which was made visible by outward symbols of initiation and communion. And they so impressed the world by the truth of their supernatural claims, and by the superiority of their moral life, that their religion overcame the world. That this can be said of the modern Church is untrue. Ought we to begin to make it true by re-establishing a universal outward fellowship? It is clear that we are hopelessly hampered in relationship to the world by broken fellowship, and so far mere mechanical unifications have their value, but they must not be over-estimated, nor confused with the 'Christian union' to which Paul exhorts the Ephesians. The unification of separated Churches is not Christian union, and has no power in itself to create it. There are Churches to-day in which parties holding religious views mutually destructive are linked together by outward chains. Christian fellowship is spiritual and not mechanical. The Church is an organism, not an organization. It is a family, not a house. It grows; it is not built. Paul's figure of the building is a metaphor which he mixes with that of a living body—the temple is a *living* temple. Christian exponents of different denominations are often in truer union with each other than with non-experiencing Christians of their own. This does not mean that external unifications are useless; on the contrary, they ought to be pursued; but it does mean that it is a delusion to call them Christian union. It would be a good thing if they were always called denominational unifications, and the great words 'unity' and 'union' applied to the objects for which Paul intended them.

For real Christian union is not an impossible ideal, even in this day when the Church is visibly broken, limiting as that breach may be and is. It can only be achieved in any case by those who, whether members of one denomination or many, are of the family of God; who are exponents of

His love and practise it. No formal adherence to an institution can create the experience which underlies all Paul's appeals to the Church to be one. And there is no way of achieving that high unity except by practising the love of Christ given and received. The family of God, after all, is not identified by men with membership of ecclesiastical institutions. It is self-evidencing in life and the work of love.

The world still awaits the manifestation of the sons of God—'the family of God.' Historical attempts to give the family visibility have been made, but they had not yet been successful. The dream of mediaeval Christianity has failed because of the secular elements in the organized Church which have neutralized the witness of its spiritual elements. The Church of God as Paul conceived it in the Epistle to the Ephesians—as a society of experiencing Christians—was never perhaps coterminous with the visible Christian communities. Catholics to-day show some awareness of this by distinguishing between Catholics and *practising Catholics*. The word Church is no doubt ambiguous in the writing of St. Paul, but a fellowship of genuine experiences of Christianity must have been in his mind when he used the terminology of the Epistle to the Ephesians to describe it. Is it not necessary to think of a genuine family within the organized Church or churches if we are to find people who correspond to the 'Body of Christ' of Paul in this letter, as the Reformers felt?

The intention of some sects—for instance, the Baptists—seems to have been to establish a society of the consciously regenerate which should answer to this description. None could even be baptized who did not make some satisfactory confession of faith. The ideal was a noble and attractive one, but it can hardly be claimed to-day that in this particular it is altogether successful. It does not seem possible to create an organized society which excludes people who are imperfectly Christian, nor perhaps is it desirable to try. The Parable of the Tares in the Wheat must not

be forgotten. The one method seems to be to create the deepest fellowship possible between all men who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. They are to be found in every religious community. Nothing could be more undesirable than to take them out of their own communities to create a new body. But is it not important that common experiences of Christianity shall discover ways of affirming mutually the common experience of Christ they share, which goes much deeper than denominational barriers, and thus give some corporate expression to the family of God? Nothing is more needed to-day than a Society of the Love of Jesus, which would bring into fellowship all those who belong to the real family of God. If such a society, of which it was a constitutive rule that there must be no dissociation from the religious denomination to which each member belonged, could be formed, a real Christian union might perhaps be loosely gathered together which would transcend the irritating divisions of the day, and fulfil the functions of the true Church. Is a union of Christians on the basis of the highest common denominator—that is to say, on the basis of experience—impossible? Church unifications tend to be on the basis of the lowest common denominator. In a word, would not a qualitative Christian union be of more value than a quantitative? Perhaps this too is the insubstantial fabric of a vision.

Even if the broken outward fellowship of Christians is to be restored, by what is called reunion, so that we may pursue our quest for the unity of the one man, love is the most necessary agent. Reunited denominations which are *nothing* but ecclesiastical organizations will gain little from their reorganization. The life of the body is love, for the body is a family. Paul found the point of reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, not in the Council of Jerusalem, but in the Cross, and in the common experience men enjoyed there. Even to arrive at the point from which Paul would have the Church start towards the goal of union, nothing is

so vital as to bring separated Christians to a common experience of redeeming love at the Cross, which breaks down middle walls of partition. Councils of Jerusalem and Lambeth have their value, but much more important is that common experience of the love of God in Christ which makes us, however separated, say with a common voice, 'Abba ! Father,' and assert our common fraternity in one family, which is the Church of the living God.

3. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

But one thing more remains to be said. The family of God is in the world for the sake of the world. This is involved in its common experience of the love of God in Christ—for that love is not only for the Church, but for the world. If we are to love with Christ's love, it must be with a love that died to save men from their sins. This surely is the significance of the poignant question of Jesus to Peter: 'Lovest thou Me?' Peter had just learnt what love meant ; how, then, could he say he loved as Jesus loved? The family of God is only a part of God's family. The very love that died, not for Jews only, but for Gentiles, could not be satisfied with the few Jews and Gentiles it gathered into the household when it was poured forth for every man that lived. A Church which is not a mission is not a Christian Church, because its love is not Christ's love which was given for the world. The Holy Catholic Church is a Salvation Army as well as a Society of Friends.

The Church is not merely a body for the intensive cultivation of holiness for its own sake. 'Christ loved the Church,' says St. Paul, 'and gave Himself for her that He might present the Church to Himself in her glory, without flaw or blemish, or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without reproach.' But what was her glory? Was it not to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world? Jesus, John tells us, on the very eve of His death for the world's

salvation, prayed, not for the world, but for the Church. 'I pray not for the world, but for those that Thou gavest Me out of the world.' It is true that He loved the Church for her own sake, but what was the Church to be? A city set on a hill which cannot be hid. Is she without reproach when she forgets that? Paul exhorts his readers in the later chapters of the Ephesians to morality—social morality, sometimes of what seems of even an elementary character. But it is a new morality—a family morality: 'Be ye imitators of God as dear children!' And what is equally striking is that this family morality is to be worked out in the secular sphere, amongst masters and workmen, and in relation to their neighbours. The contact of the holy family with the world is to be that of the family ethic applied to the world. It must even be aggressive—armed with the whole armour of God. The divine family, however much chosen out of the world to learn God's secrets—for it is to those who climb that the Lord will reveal Himself—only learns open secrets. 'When he saw the multitudes He went up into a mountain'—that is to say, turned his back on the multitude—and, when His disciples came to Him, opened His mouth and taught them, saying, 'Blessed.' Christ has His secrets for His own, but what is spoken in the ear shall be revealed from the housetops. The Church is enriched with grace that it may illuminate the world, for it is to be the light of the world. And that was Paul's faith too. 'The Son of God was revealed in me that I might preach Him to the heathen.' Neither Paul nor his master could acquiesce to-day in the wickedness and misery of the world. The divine family was in the world to cleanse it; nay, more, to make all men to see the fellowship of the mystery—that is, to make all men share in the universal family of God.

Has history a story so amazing to tell as that of the actual victory of the Christian Church? What was that holy family? F. R. Barry does not exaggerate when he uses Falstaff's description of his pitiable troop to describe it—

'Slaves as ragged as Lazarus in his painted cloth when the gluttonous dogs licked his sores—and such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters and ostlers trade fallen, the cankers of a calm world and a long peace. You would think I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals come from swine-feeding ! ' So Celsus might have described the Christian community which seemed to him so inferior in quality to educated pagans. 'Not many wise,' says St. Paul, 'not many noble : and not many respectable either, very likely.' 'Many of them were miscellaneous rascals picked up in the dockyards and back streets of notorious ports like Corinth and Alexandria. One would hardly go to Port Said at the present moment to find recruits for a spiritual revival.' And such were the family of God, holy, beloved, who sat with Christ Jesus in heavenly places ! The letters of Paul show that, even when gathered into the Church, they were by no means perfected. The Galatians were shallow and fickle ; the Corinthians crude and vain, and not too dependable in sexual morality. The Colossians were easily moved by sophistry ; the Thessalonians childish and credulous ; and the Ephesians needed much exhortation to forsake the immorality of their pagan surroundings ; and yet they were the divine instrument of the praise and glory of God.

It is difficult even to-day to understand it. One looks in Rome at the Colosseum or the baths of Caracalla, the impressive relics of paganism, and then descends into the catacombs and finds the memorials of the vital force that changed the world, but the puzzle remains unsolved. But what indescribable insanity it would have seemed to the Roman Emperor if he had been told that his greatest citizen was one Paul of Tarsus, a strolling missionary, or that those little groups of despised people were the family of God which would give a soul to that superb organization, the Roman Empire ! But the fact, however explained, is a commonplace of history,

and this 'ragged legion,' as their successors in the eighteenth century were called, 'of preaching hucksters, tricksters, scavengers, beggarmen, and draymen' turned the world upside down.

And their attack on the world was that of men armed with nothing but the whole armour of God—the helmet of salvation, the shoes of peace, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit. The shining light of transformed character, the witness of quiet and confident spirits, their mutual love—'See how these Christians love one another,' said the pagans—the sheer goodness of men who were the conscious family of God, carried with it a demonstration that Christ was risen indeed, and that they had risen with Him. The witness of such a divine family, the members of which did their duty in the secular life, and did not treat those who were not of their community, even when persecuted by them, with anger and resentment, but with family love, was the most potent and enduring revolutionary force to be found in the history of mankind. What was it that gave Early Christians a power we lack to-day? Was it not their experience of God's love in Christ? What else could have so transformed them and made them so transforming?

After all, though no such revolution has occurred since in the Christian world, there have been analogous events. Such were the missions of Francis of Assisi and the Evangelical Revival. When the Wesleys experienced the love of God in Christ, it drove them into life-long service to humanity. It was Christ's love that flooded their hearts, of which they sang :

A love that never passed by one,
Or it had passed by me.

The notional religion of their day, based on speculations about election and reprobation, was dissipated by their warm

experience, as icebergs melt in the Gulf Stream. Christ's love was something which, though so personally appropriated, could not be kept for the secret enjoyment of the men who experienced it.

O for a trumpet voice,
On *all* the world to call !
And bid their hearts rejoice
In Him who died for *all* ;
For *all* my Lord was crucified,
For *all*, for *all* my Saviour died !

And that was the experience also of the early Christians. They had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and they shed it abroad. The common experience of its members of love which had burnt away all barriers and created a family of men, not of the world while in it, drove them to commend by word and life the world's Saviour to the world.

All such movements have deep social results—the deepest. Mrs. Oliphant argued that the Tertiary order of St. Francis did much to break down the feudal system. The common family created a greater loyalty, that is to say, than the caste loyalty of the castes it joined together. There was neither king nor peasant, but only little brothers in that order. The Methodist fraternity did the same. Men like Cobbett and the early radicals disliked Methodism because it tended to break down the social class groupings of the day, or to hamper their formation. Men had a deeper loyalty on account of the fellowship in the Methodist community than that of their class, the loyalty of their class-meeting—the early Methodist fellowship.¹

The way of the divine family is the only way of surmounting the social and national cleavages of our day. Partial segregations of men into national or social groups have had important values in the progress of the centuries, but they create dangers. Alliances of groups of nations, we know

¹ See Halévy, *History of England*, vol. i., p. 521.

to our cost, sometimes make for war. The League of Nations is supernational, but it must have some stronger motive than fear if it is to prevail with future generations. Civilization can only be unified by a common interest. Paul discovered that common interest in his age in the experiences of men of God's redeeming love in Christ, enjoyed in common by men of diverse nationality, class, and education, who became one family, with a family loyalty deeper than any other human loyalty.

The Church of the Middle Ages was founded on such a conception. Why did it fail? Not because the conception was wrong, but because it followed after so many lower things than love. But the realization of that ancient dream would be the greatest boon our age could receive. Loyalty to the Church as the first of loyalties to-day is not a forceful appeal. Men ask, Which Church? And it is because there is no answer to the man in the street that it is so desirable that the Church should be one in the elementary sense of the word—a Church where visible unity of organization impresses the world. But the family of God exists notwithstanding, and the truest route even to its outward unity is in the cultivation of its inward experience. To-day men talk of loyalty to Christ and follow it, but the Christ of their loyalty is conceived in a way in which Paul hardly conceived his. Loyalty to Christ meant loyalty to Him who was one with His brothers, and to his brothers who were one with Him. Christ and His Church were one—elder brother and younger in one family, so identified in interest that they could be even regarded as head and body of one adult man.

Union not only for the sake of the Church but for the sake of the world must still be the goal for Christian men. No step in outward unification is to be despised, but it is important not to put a wrong valuation on external unification. The union which matters is the common experience of Christians of God the Father in the Son, which makes us one family. Let that experience flood men's souls again, and it will be

evident that there is something higher than Germany or England, capital or labour, black or white—namely, the family of God, of which Christ is the living head. And, since this can only be achieved by love, let us pray again Paul's prayer, making of his assumption our first petition—'that we may be rooted and grounded in love, so that we may be strong with all the saints to apprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.' And God *is* love.

'Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever.'¹

¹ Eph. iii. 17-21.

PART VI

THE CHALLENGE TO THE VALIDITY
OF EXPERIENCE

XVII

WERE PAUL'S EXPERIENCES HALLUCINATIONS?

To those who believe that God and men can communicate with each other the difficulties of Paul's experience are only those of interpretation. There are, of course, difficulties in the expression of experience to which Paul was as subject as any other man. The general question is discussed in Part I. Paul's expression of experience needs careful analysis, partly because the deepest things are never quite communicable by language. Deissmann suggests that a J. S. Bach is needed to interpret Paul, rather than a Baur, Harnack, or Lightfoot. Moreover, when a man writes of an experience twenty years old, which has had an enduring influence over his life, he is not likely altogether to avoid reading into it later reflections and experiences. Nor is this illegitimate. Life interprets experience, and the experience comes to mean more than it did earlier. Unless a man is giving a careful account, not only of his experience but of what it was to him at the very moment of its occurrence—a habit of scientific analysis and statement quite modern—he will inevitably refer to an earlier experience through the medium of later experiences and reflections. A careful comparison of the various allusions of Paul to his conversion shows clearly enough that the event, as he himself conceived it, was a supernatural contact with the exalted Jesus, of such a character that a flood of light illuminated his mind and a divine act liberated his soul and revolutionized his life. It proves nothing against the objective reality of his experience, to show that the state of

his soul was just ready for such an experience. Even on the assumption of its objectivity, experience can only be understood as we have seen¹ by some theory of the receptivity of the subject.

Is Paul to be believed when he speaks of his revelations and his contacts with Jesus as if they were experiences of objective reality? Few would question that Paul's descriptions of his own feelings were true. It is not the truth of his experiences as facts of consciousness that is disputed, but whether or not Paul's explanation of them is credible. May not these experiences have been hallucinations? If so the Christianity which has often reverified them is built up upon a series of hallucinations. The question in the last analysis must be faced, as to whether the alleged objective experiences of Paul were facts or illusions.

The vocation experience of Paul as he sets it out, both in relation to his apostleship and to his ministry to the Gentiles, implies a moment of illumination, but it is unquestionably difficult to be sure how far reflection and deduction entered into the actual expression of that experience, as recorded in Eph. iii. All that can be claimed with certainty as to the Apostle's consciousness of experience of Christ, is the fact that such experience evidently took place. The expression of it, no doubt, was influenced by subjective conditions of Paul's mind, and necessarily so if that mind were anything other than a *tabula rasa*.

Many scholars, on grounds which are not conclusive, even if plausible, regard Paul as an epileptic and his visions as pathological. If such views were sound they would make little difference to the *permanent* religious experience of Paul, which is the fact most demanding explanation, but in point of fact they cannot be demonstrated, and the positive evidence for them is slight. The argument on which such conclusions are based is often an argument in a circle. It amounts to little more than the statement that Paul had visions.

¹ p. 31 ff.

Epileptics have visions. Paul was the victim of an obscure disease, therefore Paul was an epileptic and his visions were hallucinations ! This is not a very convincing argument when baldly stated. All that is certain is that the disease of Paul, being unspecified, may have been epilepsy !

Jung's psychological explanation of Paul's conversion is interesting and up to a point illuminating. Paul, he thinks, was already sub-consciously convinced of the truth of the claim that Jesus was Messiah, but sternly repressed that conviction. An epileptic fit overtook him on his way to Damascus. In the trance condition brought about by it he had a vision of Jesus and heard his voice. The sub-conscious conviction became dominant and he followed the Lord.¹ If this be a true psychological account of the vision and audition of Paul, does it really do anything more than describe mental processes, whereby Paul came to his realization of the truth, as it is in Jesus. The fact of Paul's experience which matters, is his continual testimony throughout his life to the presence of Jesus, which cannot be explained as due to a succession of pathological experiences. The 'conflict dream theory' of Rivers might possibly explain the working of Paul's mental machinery, whereby he came to his conviction of the truth of Christianity. It may be true that Paul's trance was of the nature of a dream, in which thoughts sub-consciously repressed re-shaped themselves in the form of his vision and audition, and had, to him, the objective reality of sense impression, but even if that were admitted, the difficulty remains that it does not explain the continuity of his experience of God in Christ, preserved throughout his life, which created so wonderful a new world for him. Nor does it explain how he was able to conduct others into that new world, who did not share his so-called hallucination. Paul came into touch with reality—reality external to himself—whatever the working of the human mechanism

¹ Jung, *Psychological Types*, pp. 575-8.

by which his experience was brought about.¹ The immediacy of religious experience of the Divine is a difficult problem as was shown in the second chapter,² because an experience from without can only be received through a human medium, which 'stains the white radiance of eternity,' and can only be communicated by words to others which express ideas common to hearer and speaker. In the case of Paul it need not be denied, indeed it may be asserted, that his previous psychological experience of conflict, and possibly of sub-conscious conviction, fitted him for the divine revelation he actually received. There is one consideration of importance too often overlooked to-day, and that is as to whether Paul's experience and that of the early Christians of the risen Christ is quite analogous with ordinary mystic experience. The word hallucination is sometimes used by psychologists, not necessarily to mean delusion, which is the sense in which the word is used in this book, but rather to convey the idea that while touch with objective reality may be present, the experience of it is expressed by mental fantasies and pictured by them to the consciousness. The word may mean no more than the imaginative interpretation which the mind, particularly the poetic mind—as, say, in the case of Joan of Arc—automatically gives to genuine experiences of external reality. This is quite possibly a fair explanation of many visions and auditions, but one may question whether it is a satisfactory explanation of the unique experiences of early Christians of the risen Christ. 1 Corinthians xv. especially emphasizes the multitude of people to whom the manifestation of the risen Christ came. The appearances of Jesus to His disciples were numerous enough to be difficult to explain on the grounds on which Paul's conversion is explained by Jung. Must not Jesus, as the gospel narratives of His resurrection imply, in some way have been 'materialized,' and was not the vision of Him which came to men a vision seen by fleshly

¹ Rivers, *Conflict and Dreams*.

² Chapter II., p. 41.

eyes? Is it not more likely that Paul's experience was that of sense impression? It must not be forgotten that Paul gives us no account of his conversion in his letters, and that his allusions to it are to an event which happened at least eighteen years before. His allusions unquestionably imply, however, that Paul regarded his experience as a sense impression, and built up his claim to be an apostle on the conviction that he saw Jesus as truly as any of his Galilean companions saw Him. It is very questionable whether a distinction between delusion and hallucination as a description of Paul's conversion can be made, and the obviously unique character of his conversion which he himself regards, not as normal mystical experience, but as a special act of God, cannot be explained away. But let it be repeated once more, the fact of Paul's experience which matters to us, is not an isolated moment at the beginning of his Christian life, but his continual union with Christ to which all his writings and all his missionary toil give the most convincing witness.

But to the man to whom all supernatural phenomena are mere projections of a man's own consciousness or to one who has no belief in God, or in a personal God who can, or at all events does, communicate with his children, Paul's supernatural experiences are difficult to explain. Such men realize well enough the momentous influence of those alleged experiences. They are able to see, as well as others, that Christianity, for instance, could not have existed without a belief in the supernatural, which was unquestioned on the part of its earlier experients, but, as of the Jews, it must be written of them that 'though He did so many miracles before them yet they did not believe.' They are compelled by their naturalistic creed to explain Christianity as if it were not supernatural, that is to play *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. And in our times the amount of learning and ability which has been wasted over this hopeless proceeding is astonishing. Christianity must be

explained, they think, within the limits of Scientific History, which disregards the supernatural as a factor.¹

The most serious attack to-day, however, on supernatural phenomena does not come from the scientific historian but the New Psychologist. The attempts to explain away all supernatural experience on naturalistic grounds is really an attack on the fundamental postulates of religion. By this we do not mean that psychology is of necessity hostile to religion. Psychological analysis of Paul's experience is quite helpful up to a point, but whenever it assumes that *all* Paul's experience can be explained by his own mentality and mental history, and that his ideas of God were merely adumbrations of his sub-conscious mind, it really has no ultimate account to give of the experiences which to Paul were objective, except that they were delusions.

The experiences of Paul are either objective facts as he thought they were or they are illusions and hallucinations, and no amount of fine writing can prevent an honest man facing that alternative, with the ultimate consequence that Christianity is either built on the Rock—the Christ of Paul's and all other Christians' religious experience—or on the shifting sand of fancies and illusions.

We have remarked earlier in our summary of Paul's experiences² the difficulty of stating clearly their objective content—what he meant by Christ. But perhaps an additional word is required at this point. How much of the subjective and human element is there in Paul's account of the Jesus Christ of his experience?

Here we come to a problem not altogether soluble. Paul saw Jesus. He saw the crucified Jesus exalted to heavenly power. He discovered a Lord and Master in Jesus and immediately obeyed Him. He was himself conscious of quickening with the spirit of Jesus, and his statement that God revealed His Son in him means the continuous

¹ See Chap. IV., pp. 72 ff.

² Chap. VIII., p. 130.

realization of Jesus as spirit within him. His intuition at the supreme moment of his conversion cannot be completely analysed, but this Jesus whom he saw, he knew to be the Messiah of the Jews. He was the man exalted to heaven who had come from heaven, had been crucified and had risen again. How Paul arrived at his knowledge of the pre-existence of Christ we know not, although the Jews believed in pre-existence.¹ But given that Jesus had been crucified and was risen, that he regarded Paul's persecution of the Church as persecution of Himself, Paul almost certainly found the explanation in the early Christian teaching which was a teaching of redeeming love. 'Christ died for our sins' was a tradition Paul received from the disciples,² and the belief that God came down to earth in Jesus was, if not direct intuition (revelation), a forced deduction from the facts of the case. What it is necessary to understand is that Paul's experience of Jesus Christ was to his own consciousness valid objective experience, fundamental in his life and teaching, and it corresponds with that of other Christians. Otherwise, it could not possibly have been effective. Christ as Paul knew Him can be discovered in any of the Apostle's letters. The more one visualizes his unconscious self-portraiture in them, the more clearly does one see the Christ who lives in him. The truth of experience cannot be proved by mathematical methods, but if the contact with the unseen to which it gives witness is unreal, then Christianity is built on a series of hallucinations, and, ultimately, a belief in a personal God who has any real contact with men must be rejected. That the best things in the world should be based on delusions is not inherently probable, and, if true, would suggest that the real controller of this world is a mocking devil. For salvation, through hallucination, suggests some malign agent of government. It is difficult to think such a cunning device could be mere chance.

It may be said that our argument implies the vicious

¹ Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 270.

² Cor. xv. 6.

theory that consequences are more important than truth. If it is true that Paul was a hallucinated man, it is true and it is foolish to speak as if it were otherwise. But it is not mere pragmatism to say that consequences must be considered in assessing the value of certain arguments. If one believes in the moral control of the universe and regards that as a primary truth, it is quite impossible not to question the truth of a theory of Christianity which assumes that it was built up on the fancies of deluded men. The question as to whether there is such moral control is another matter. The whole problem of Paul's experience and of religious experience generally, is a much wider one than appears at first sight, and is based ultimately on the truth or falsehood of the supernatural control of the world, or, in a word, on our views of God. One spills a good deal of unnecessary ink in discussing such a question as Paul's experience, with people who reject the moral control of the universe by a personal God. For Christians, in any really significant sense of the word, a personal God is an axiom, and a Christianity without a personal God is a farce.

XVIII

THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

It has been impossible to write the foregoing pages without sometimes remembering the modern challenge to their underlying postulates. Christians who are themselves experiencers of the grace of God are not greatly disturbed by the challenge, but many professing Christians have little such experience, and are no doubt increasingly sensitive to the fact that there are certain people who affirm that the New Psychology supports those who deny that God and man communicate with each other. How far, then, can evangelical experiencers be said to give a true account of their own religious experience? Is there any value in the doctrines that arise from it? Is God anything but a vague force, *élan vital*, creative mind, or some such abstraction? Is personal experience of God any more truly an evidence for God than our sense impressions of the sky that it is a dome an evidence that it is a dome?

Now, it must be admitted that there are alleged religious experiences which are not objectively true. Paul himself recommends us to test the spirits whether they be of God, and he was aware of 'pretended revelations.'¹ The tests he would have applied no doubt would have been practical or ethical tests. Paul was not the only man with evangelical experience who has given similar warnings. Wesley was afraid of the vagaries of individual experiences, and regarded mystical literature perhaps with even too little sympathy, and his tests of experience values were ethical and collective. Such tests can be applied with some amount of effectiveness

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 2 (*A. S. Way's translation*).

in distinguishing false from true, and abnormal experience, which may be hallucination, from experience collectively and individually continuous amongst Christians who follow the *necessary* conditions of receptivity. That great experients should themselves show distrust of certain alleged spiritual experiences makes some think that all religious experiences should be treated as hallucinatory, but surely it is a sounder conclusion that the discriminations of great leaders of religion is evidence for, and not against, the validity of the experience to which they give testimony. And the tests we shall suggest of the validity of Christian experience are not dissimilar—at least, the last two—from those applied by William James. They are threefold—whether it is shared by other people or not ; whether the experience does what it claims to do ; and whether the fruits of it are such as grow on the tree of life. They are good tests, and the first of them not the least important. Mr. J. C. Webb writes ¹: ‘ A group theory of religion, which ascribes, or tends to ascribe, a genuinely objective reality *only* to what the individual experiences when uninfluenced by the “ collective representations ” which he possesses as a member of the group—such a group theory is unable to account for individual religion, and must in the end see in it an illusion.’ The objects of an experience are recognizable as objects to other members of the group when they fulfil the conditions of apprehension.

There is nothing new in the fact that non-Christians challenge the experiences of Christian men, and think such men to be either fraudulent or the subjects of delusions. Such challenges were made in early Christianity as well as to-day. Much religious experience has always been described by words equivalent to the modern word ‘ pathological.’ But such explanations can never have been entirely satisfactory, even to those who made them. ‘ The superiority complex’ of the learned has been irritated by the claims of revelation made by the unlearned—‘ the babes.’ The writer

¹ Webb, *Group Theories of Religion*, p. 180.

once heard the mayor of a provincial town argue for the Baconian authorship of the works attributed to Shakespeare on the ground that he, the mayor, matriculated at London University with honours at sixteen years of age, which he said Shakespeare could not have done! Having confessed, in a moment of unusual modesty, that he could not have written these plays, he asked, 'How then could Shakespeare have done so?' This feeling underlies, more than is recognized, much of the unbelief even of the learned in the religious intuitions of the uneducated. But what is to be said of particular religious experiences whose far-reaching influence on mankind is unquestionable? What of the religious experiences of Paul, Augustine, Francis, Luther, and Wesley—to say nothing of one they regard as a man, Jesus? Is any one really satisfied with the explanation that these men were the victims of hallucination? Paul's experiences probably more than those of the others, have been explained on such grounds.

Even if Paul, like some of the world's greatest men, was an epileptic, his pathological misfortune is incapable of explaining his joyous religious experience. There is a difference in kind between the hallucination of catalepsy, drugs, and hypnotic states and the steady experience of the apostle. No greater mistake is made than the over-emphasis of Paul's sudden conversion, and the special revelations of which he himself, with the exception of 2 Cor. xii., gives no account whatever in the few slight allusions he makes to them.

Now, in some ways the new psychological analysis of experience has given a much sharper definition to the subject-matter of our inquiry. Religious experience is regarded as a mental state which can be isolated and examined. As in the case of all other experiences, its aspects can be labelled cognition, affect, and conation. Hence it can be regarded objectively and treated as material for examination. It is regarded as valid human experience. Experiences are not

regarded as fraudulent when they say such and such things happened. It is quite acknowledged that such experiences were to the mind of the experient as objective as they said they were. Wrede would not be regarded as unscientific when he wrote that Paul's vision was as objective to him as the facts of a sense impression. The affects and conations are such as recur and are part of the valid experiences of a human being. Religious experiences produce the moral results which they are said to produce. The New Psychology would not dispute, but affirm, that there is here a large amount of valid human experience with which any science of the mind must deal. So far the religious experient and the psychologist occupy common ground. But most psychologists would not admit that religious experience is due to the exercise of any special spiritual functions of the religious experient. Nor need the religious experient; although he might claim that he exercises towards religion certain potentialities common to all men which can become atrophied with disuse. By that I mean, that many of the instincts common to all, through a failure to respond to external stimuli never become habits. 'God soon fades out of the life,' says Mrs. Besant, 'of the man who doesn't pray.' Such a statement is explicable either by the non-existence of God or by the loss of our touch with Him. But to return to our point; there surely is common ground for examination of the mental state we call religious experience between the psychologist and the religious experient. Psychology does not find God in those experiences, but only finds mental conditions of the same sort as it finds in the mental life when viewed under other aspects. But why should it? To say that God is no part of mental experience, considered as cognition, affect, and conation, is like saying that the sonatas of Beethoven are no part of an organ, or like the foolish doctor's saying, so often quoted, that, though he had dissected hundreds of bodies, he had never found a soul.

And this is where the modern psychologist and the Christian experient begin to differ. What is the real cause of these mental states, and their true value? Does not the empirical psychologist get outside the range of his science when he philosophizes about what he cannot examine? The Christian experient may listen to his explanations, but he is not under the least intellectual obligation to accept them when he sees that they are based on widely challenged *a priori* metaphysical assumptions. While the expert in psychology demands attention on his own subject, one may legitimately question whether he has any right, unshared by other people as badly informed as he is on metaphysical questions, to be followed on matters to which generally he has given no special study.

The New Psychology suggests at least two ways in which religious experience may be explained. One of them springs out of the teaching of a man of acknowledged genius, Sigismund Freud. The disciples of Freud by no means commit themselves to all of their master's theories, but they acknowledge their obligation to his main deductions from his 'dream studies.' The main idea of psycho-analysis was well expressed in a speech of Sir R. Armstrong Jones, reported in *The Times*: 'Psycho-analysis had been likened to a house with two floors, in which there lived two families in conflict. A select, small, and respectable family lived on the floor upstairs (consciousness), while a dirty, untidy, primitive, and rather numerous disreputable crew lived in the basement (unconscious mind). The latter continually encroached upon the upstairs privacy, and so persistent was this disturbance that a policeman (Freud's censor) had to be summoned to keep the peace by standing on the stairs inside the house between the two families. It took the policeman all his time to keep the two families apart, and sometimes he failed, because the basement people, who had been repressed and thwarted, disguised themselves as orderly folk (sublimation) and made dashes upstairs, owing

to their unsatisfied desires. Through their disguise they got past the policeman, causing the upstairs people a considerable annoyance (neurosis). At times, when sleep overcame the upstairs family (as well as the policeman), the downstairs lot came through (dreams) without disguise and caused great havoc with the peace of the top-floor family, dramatizing, condensing, and generally acting obtrusively. The policeman, however, being ashamed of his inefficiency, willingly distorted the account (dream) to clear himself.'

With some qualifications, the main ideas of Freud have been elaborated with immense erudition by C. J. Jung in the *Psychology of the Unconscious*, with certain special applications to religion. The suppressed sexual feelings of which Freud said so much were the disreputable persons of the basement of the house of human personality, which got through, under disguises, in dreams. Dreams are used by Jung to explain the origin of religious customs of primitive peoples. He tries to show that many religious ideas are the sex dreams of the race in its childhood. Both psychologists seem to think that sex notions haunt the dreams of childhood. According to Jung, religion reveals its origin in early racial sex symbols. It needs a clever psychologist, of what normal people might deem morbid mentality, to penetrate the disguise of the symbols which Jung analyses. It is doubtful whether many persons will ever accept the fantastic explanations of some of the customs of primitive religions described by Jung, or come to regard simple customs as foul thoughts disguised. But a study of Jung's views would take us too far afield, although they are not without bearing on the theological ideas of his less fanciful work, *Psychological Types*.

Jung regards God as a psychological function of man, and the God imago as 'that imprint which from the beginning of time has been the collective expression of the most powerful and absolute operation of *unconscious*

libido-concentration upon consciousness.'¹ Hence whatever experience of God consciously comes to a man is the effect on him of his 'unconscious,' wherein are gathered up, in some way undefined, all sorts of race-memories. Or, to put the view in the words of less rich though more lucid writers than Jung—for instance, Delacroix: 'Where the mystic postulates God the psychologist need only postulate the subconscious.'²

What may be noted is that the psycho-analytic school agree

(1) That religious experiences of God really experience something which comes from outside their normal consciousness.

(2) That the experience comes from the unconscious, subconscious, or preconscious, or whatever label the particular psychologist chooses for it.

(3) That this subconsciousness is part of the individual consciousness of the experient.

What they do not prove, although they often assert or suggest, is what the limit of the subconscious is. In point of fact, they are describing mental states of which their knowledge is admittedly slight, but which one might imagine, when reading their conclusions, was as well mapped out as an English county. They do not tell us whether the subconscious is subconsciously influenced by anything external to itself. Why it should not be if it is a mental process is uncertain. That there is no scientific knowledge possible, as Thouless says of the activities of the supra-consciousness or the subliminal self, may be true, but such activities may still be regarded as in the range of the possible; they might even account for certain unclassified psychic phenomena.

But perhaps the most plausible and popular psychological explanation of the God of experience is that of 'projection.' This is well stated by Tansley in a chapter of cleverly

¹ Jung, *Psychological Types*, p. 308. *Libido* Tansley defines as 'specific psychic energy attached to a great complex' (*New Psychology*, p. 301).

² Quoted by Thouless, *Introduction to Psychology of Religion*, p. 269.

arranged material, hetero-suggestive throughout of his conclusion. Projection is the act by which the human mind projects dominant ideas on an outward object, as, when a drunkard sometimes talks of the ruin of his life by his wife's drunkenness, he projects his drunkenness on her. A closely allied idea is *identification*. An illustration Tansley gives is the pathological case of a sex-obsessed woman, who, having read of a case of sexual outrage in the newspaper, imagines herself a victim of a like outrage. Projection takes the form of *idealization*, as when a man falling in love with a woman—say Jane Smith—regards her, not as Jane Smith, but 'ideal womanhood,' and is afterwards disappointed. 'In a primitive state of culture man projects parts of his own personality upon the forces of nature, and thus personifies and often deifies them.' Tansley might have gone on to say that in advanced civilizations we do the same with a favourite dog, treating it as if it were a human being. By such instances he leads up to our personification of the good and evil within us by projecting them on God and the Devil, and finally, in civilizations like ours, he argues that we project the idea of God from our own personification and idealization of what is good for the race or what is highest in ourselves.

Any educated Christian would admit that men sometimes make Gods in their own image, that is, that they project their own image on their idea of God, but this does not explain the origin of the idea of God. Can idealization explain it? The Christian explanation that good within a man is the Holy Ghost or the activity of the Holy Ghost cannot be ignored, but if accepted would imply that projection only means the objectification of inner experiences which are themselves divine. The anthropomorphic character of our conception of God is explained, not by the projection of the God idea on certain objects, but by the projection of human passions on the idea of God, just as a drunkard projects his drunkenness on his sober wife.

But the idea of God already exists when the projection is made. The instances which Tansley gives of projection all imply that there is something 'given' to project. The idea of God must be regarded as a datum of this kind. It is impossible to demonstrate that in its origin it was the result of idealization; nor is it likely to have been, as even Durkheim's criticism of psycho-analytic subjectivism referred to below goes to show.

It is interesting to turn from the new psychologists, with their subjective, subconscious-activity explanation of the experienced objects of the waking consciousness of men, to the views of the Paris Social Psychological School—Levy-Bruhl and Durkheim.¹

Without attempting to discuss Durkheim's theory expounded in his book *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, it is interesting to note his standpoint—'When we commence our study of primitive religions, it is with the assurance that they hold to reality and express it.' It is inadmissible that systems of ideas like religions should be made up of a tissue of illusions.² He does not question that God is object to the mind of men who experience Him. He does not admit that God comes from the men's subconscious or 'unconscious.' He does not regard God as a subjective hallucination. So far he is in opposition to the psychoanalysts. But God as object, he tries to show, to put it very roughly, is part of the social practice of a primitive race. He is what the reaction of a public meeting on a speaker *en rapport* with his audience is to the speaker. The idea, though brilliantly wrought out by means of an exhaustive examination of Totemism, is not very convincing, but, from one point of view, it is interesting in that it gives another illustration of the ways so cleverly described by Gilbert Chesterton in *Orthodoxy*, in which opponents of Christianity tend to cancel out. Perhaps a quotation from

¹ A good exposition or discussion of Durkheim and Levy-Bruhl is *Group Theories of Religion of the Individual*, by C. J. Webb.

² Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 70.

an eminent American psychologist, Professor Bisset Pratt, is not an inappropriate comment: 'The "Laws of Psychology" can hardly be stated explicitly without a wink, and I sometimes feel that modern psychologists are in much the same predicament as the augurs of Cicero's time.'¹

There is another psychological word to which attention must be given—the word 'rationalization.' 'Rationalization' is defined by Tansley 'as the production of a "reason" for, as distinct from the true cause of, an act or conation.'² The person who is always making 'excuses' for his actions is perhaps the best if crudest instance of 'rationalization.' He finds plausible 'reasons' for deeds because he is ashamed of the true ones. 'Rationalization,' in other words, is merely a six-syllabled label for what in most people is almost an instinct of self-defence. That there are great dangers in this very natural tendency, when exposition of abstract opinions is undertaken, is no doubt perfectly true.

Tansley thinks it is the special device of theologians. 'The "rationalization" of religious beliefs that are to all appearance contradicted by experience of life constitute a regular system, which is called Christian apologetics.'³ Now, it may or may not be credible to Tansley, but it is a curious fact that 'rationalization' seems to many the best description of the religious philosophy of many psychologists, and to some extent, however unconscious he may be of it, even of Tansley himself. This being so, it is perhaps worth while to consider the question a little more closely. It may be at once admitted that 'rationalization' is sometimes to be found in Christian apologetics, but that is a different thing from saying such apologetic is a regular system of 'rationalization.' But what about naturalistic writers on Christianity, who having eliminated as impossible the supernatural explanation of religion, are compelled to find reasons

¹ Bisset Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 456.

² Tansley, *The New Psychology*, p. 182.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

for facts more naturally explained by supernaturalism? But all reasoning, it must be remembered, is based on postulates. There are several quite *undemonstrable* ones that lie at the base of all scientific inquiry. Tansley himself frankly says that such and such things must be postulated—that means he cannot prove them—as fundamental to his own inquiries.

Empirical science, however, which professes to derive all its conclusions from observation and experiment, is acknowledged to-day to be based on unproved assumptions. There is no objection to that in itself. 'By faith the worlds were made.' Let us call a philosopher, not a theologian, to witness. Dr. A. N. Whitehead deals effectively with the question in his *Science and the Modern World*. One or two quotations from his first chapter will suffice for our purposes. 'Science has remained predominantly an anti-rationalistic movement, based upon a naïve faith. What reasoning it has wanted has been borrowed from mathematics, which is a surviving relic of Greek rationalism, following the deductive method. Science repudiates philosophy. In other words, it has never cared to justify its faith or to explain its meanings; and has remained blandly indifferent to its refutation by Hume.' 'There is, however,' he says, 'a Nemesis which waits upon those who deliberately avoid avenues of knowledge. Oliver Cromwell's cry echoes down the ages, "My brethren, by the bowels of Christ I beseech you bethink you that you may be mistaken."'¹ As we hope to show later, some of the conclusions of psychologists on religion may be due to their avoidance of certain avenues of knowledge.

Our reasoned conclusions do very much depend on our assumptions and postulates. If a psychologist thinks that an examination of mental processes by his particular method is all that is needed for an account of man's spiritual life and activity, much of his work will be, and in point of fact

¹ A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, pp. 20, 21.

is, 'rationalization' to support that underlying assumption based on a rather naïve faith.

Now, the Christian apologist also makes undemonstrable assumptions. He believes in God. He has certain fundamental religious experiences of which, he says, as Newman said, that he is more certain than of the existence of hands and feet. He can no more prove them than he can prove an axiom. They are self-evidencing truths to him, or sometimes faiths regarded as working hypotheses (a term which Tansley himself is compelled to use of propositions of which there is no demonstration) which work. If they were proved to be untrue, his world would as surely fall to pieces as Tansley's would if his postulate of causality were proved untrue.

What can be said of these ultimate convictions? A man knows a thing is beautiful, but he cannot define beauty. He knows what religion means, but he can no more define it than he can define electricity. Say what we will, convictions of this sort are as compulsive on our minds as mathematical demonstrations, and they can be as well supported by reason as scientific postulates can, whether the reasoning be called rationalization or not. Because rationalization may be largely self-defence, it cannot therefore be made to exclude legitimate reasoning in support of what one believes to be true and to be the most important of truths—God and religion. Nothing is more foolish than the attempt of a man to persuade himself that his judgments are without bias. Tansley is probably correct in his statement that 'the desire for objective truth is not a primary element in the human mind,' and also in his view that it ought to be our endeavour to make it one. No Christian apologist would differ from him about that. But, notwithstanding that, the complete detachment from human interests which would eradicate all bias does not seem possible to human beings as long as they are human, whether of the theological or psychological type.

And it is by no means certain that attachment as well as detachment is not necessary for true verdicts. The jury has its value as well as the judge, the attached persons as well as the detached expert. In point of fact, the notion of any man that his judgements are perfectly detached is an instance of the conceit which Tansley ascribes to the 'extravert' who is unacquainted with introspection. Bias must be acknowledged as one of the necessary limitations of a human being, against which he is more likely to contend when he recognizes it is there than when he does not. Jung says—and most people would agree—'There is a psychological personal equation. . . . We can see colours, but not wave-lengths. One sees what one can best see from one's self. . . . I misdoubt the principle of "pure observation" in so-called objective psychology. . . . The demand that a man should see only objectively is quite out of the question, for it is impossible. We may well be satisfied if we do not see too subjectively.'¹

The present writer would admit frankly that he wishes religious experience to be acknowledged as objective fact, and wishes it because he believes that, if it be regarded otherwise, Christianity would be ultimately discredited; but he believes that such experience is fact, and that the attempts to show it to be other are the result of 'rationalizing' processes often unconscious on the part of the critics. What one objects to is the gratuitous assumption that particular men who lack a certain kind of experience, and who have no wish to enjoy it, are more without bias in their attempts to discredit than those who enjoy it are in their attempts to accredit religion.

It may perhaps be well to point out the bias which underlies so much psychological criticism of religion. If I may use a graphic epithet of my friend, Mr. Arnold Lunn, it is 'theophobia.' This widely spread disease largely arises from modern humanistic feeling. Ever since the Renaissance

¹ Jung, *Psychological Types*, pp. 16, 17.

men have striven to account for things in the terms of human observation, without appeal to philosophy or theology, and without any account being taken of the God-hypothesis. This limitation of mental activity, like all intense activity, has undoubtedly had some good results. But the large inexplicable infinite left unexplored does sometimes make an impact on minds which carry out operations in a limited sphere, and cannot always forget that the content, so to speak, of a man's ignorance bears a relation to the knowledge of the most learned man which even mathematical formulas are incapable of expressing. This limitation has a more irritating effect on men than they think. Certain processes which have been compendiously ascribed to God have been analysed, and God seems no longer to be necessary as an explanation, and the feeling that the human mind is really capable of understanding all the other things still outside its range tends to produce a mental attitude well described as 'theophobia.'

It is noteworthy that pure psychological analyses neither prove nor disprove the main claims of religion. The psychologist, *re* psychology, deals with mental processes and facts. He takes the mental machine to pieces and shows us the wheels. Or, to change the figure, he examines a process—a chain of causes and effects—and shows us the links ; but he cannot tell whether a hand in the unseen is holding, as it were, one end of the chain. And when, in his writings, he assumes or states that there is no such hand, he does not make that assumption on psychological grounds, but on other grounds, valid or invalid. Psychology may support his negative assumptions or conclusions, but it does not create or demonstrate them. There are no *facts* of psychology, as such, which would need to be rejected if the hypothesis of God were, in point of fact, true. Some may think the human mind is an automatic machine, but there is no evidence deduced from the machine examined which

discredits the view that it may be an organ played upon by some external organist.

Now, psychologists are men as well as psychologists, and obviously have every right to form their own metaphysical conclusions, but Christians have also a right to object when metaphysical views—often those of men whose studies have been in other directions—are dumped on a credulous public in such a way as to make it think they are the findings of scientific psychology when they are only the lay opinions of psychologists in their non-psychological moments.

'Theophobia' is an *a priori* attitude of mind of many modern humanist writers, psychological and other. It is the result of a conscious or subconscious determination to explain man and the universe apart from God. It has already been shown that scientific historians plainly state that the supernatural is not regarded by them as history. Many modern attempts have been made to rewrite the history of the first century after supernatural events have been eliminated, or the supernatural interpretation of those events—which amounts to the same thing. They have been made by clever men who have produced readable books, but the books do not give the account of religious experiences their subjects would have given, nor would it have been possible for Christianity to have persisted if the early Christians had regarded Christianity as other than a supernatural movement.

The attitude of psychologists towards the supernatural is precisely the same. As long as psychology merely deals with the facts of mental life, this matters little more than it matters whether a chemist is an atheist or a Plymouth Brother when he is analysing substances. But the chemist who rejects God because he cannot find Him in a bottle of sulphuric acid is no more to be credited than a psychologist who rejects God because he cannot find him in the cognitions, affects, and conations of a modern Christian. To the Christian, God is the ultimate explanation of both the sulphuric acid and the Salvation Army. The scientific man who has

rejected God has, consciously or subconsciously, acted on the assumption that, whatever else explained them, God did not, and hence, as we think, has often 'rationalized' his conclusion.

But it may be argued that this attitude of mind is hardly fairly described by such a term as theophobia. If that objection could be sustained in some instances, it is difficult to think that the attitude of mind of many thinkers is much overstated by my friend's energetic label. A good instance is to be found in the works of Professor Leuba, an American psychologist—that is to say, if the only work of his I have read, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, is a fair expression of his views and attitude. Both its own contents and the references of other psychologists to his other works imply it is. Professor Leuba gives some analyses of the mentality of mystics, abnormal persons, and in the principal case at second hand. He examines mental states, the normality of which, it would have been fairer to have stated, has always been challenged by Protestants. He tries to show that similar conditions can be induced by drugs. The argument is, if it means anything, that because, under certain pathological conditions, people experienced phantasies to their consciousness objective, and these phantasies are known to be illusions, that all objective religious experiences are therefore really hallucinatory phantasies produced by auto-suggestion or something kindred, which, if analysed, would appear to be more or less pathological. Professor Leuba does not inform us whether his examination of mystics destroyed his religious faith, but it might interest him to know that John Wesley confessed that mystic studies nearly caused him to make shipwreck of religion, so he gave them up. *Verb sap.*

There are no doubt alleged mystical experiences which could be accepted by nobody. But some of the grounds on which Leuba questions the validity of such experiences, such as 'incommunicability,' are no evidence, as we have shown,

against their objective truth.¹ And, as has been clearly shown by Miss Evelyn Underhill and others, some mystics have been socially valuable as a consequence of their mystic experiences, abnormal as they have been. But an objection to Professor Leuba's second-hand examination of the heroine of von Hügel's *Catherine of Genoa*, and the adverse conclusion he comes to, is not one's chief objection to this work. It is rather to the attitude of a man, who obviously examined such experiences with a mind closed to the explanation of them which would be given by a Christian experient. There is a frankness in the opinions of the professor's last chapters about God and religion which is quite refreshing. He thinks he can explain religion without God. He may or he may not, but he gives us no psychological facts from which a conclusion can be deduced. Two of his arguments may be mentioned.

The first is what may be termed the argument of the receding God, namely, that scientific discoveries have resulted in the attribution of many things, like thunderstorms, to natural causes which before were attributed to God, and that this is not just the whim of the moment but the progressive finding of scientific research. It need not be questioned that this argument, when well stated, has some force, although when analysed it is much less plausible than it appears; but even supposing it is taken at its face value, what has it to do with psychology?

The second argument that we will adduce is pitiful. Professor Leuba seems to have taken a census of the views of professors of American universities as to their beliefs in God and immortality. A majority believed in both. The psychologists, however, were the most incredulous, and, according to Leuba, they were incredulous in the proportion of their intelligence. As Thouless has pointed out, the value of the census might depend somewhat on the character of the professors, but, waiving that objection, may we ask

¹ Chap. I., p. 31 ff.

whether any one imagines that this has anything to do with psychology? It reminds one of Stephen Leacock's account of an experiment in Church union in an American city between an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian Church, whose members became a joint stock company for the conservation of religion in that city. When trouble arose about the question of eternal punishment, it was decided to settle it by a vote. If a majority of the company said there was no such thing as eternal punishment, then there was none; but if a majority said there was, there was! The comment of the Psalmist is not without point—'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.'

Unfortunately Leuba's book is sent out as a statement of psychology, and, although the arguments which dispose of God are not psychological, psychology gets the credit for its negations. What is evident is that the work is a piece of 'Theophobic rationalization.'

But even when one reads a lucid and moderate work like Tansley's *New Psychology* one wonders whether it is free from the same tendency. The attempt to provide a God-substitute by means of what he calls the 'ethical self' and the 'rational self' is rather complex. From a Christian standpoint it looks rather like a clever analysis of what Christians mean by the conscience in which the bits, having been dislocated, are *almost* fitted together again, although the very term 'ethical self' is a personification. One has no particular objection to the analysis, but to say that it is projection to call it God, or, as we would rather say, the Holy Spirit, is no more true than to say it is projection to personify it under the 'hypostasis' of the ethical self. The dislike of the word God is just a bit of the humanist 'theophobia' so typical of much modern writing—a rationalizing attempt to explain things without using the simple word God.

This becomes plain in Tansley when he is compelled to acknowledge: 'It cannot be doubted that God has been

a necessity to the human race, that He is still a necessity, and will continue to be.'¹ But it is difficult to understand why the morality of alleged 'rationalization' of Christian dogmatic systems should be questioned by a man who urges the necessity of seeking after objective truth, if God, who is a mere projection, is to be regarded as a necessity of the human race. For when the human race comes to think that God is only a projection, it is quite clear that he will no longer even be 'projected,' and the human race will lose its 'necessity.' And yet Tansley pleads for the quest of objective truth!

The Zurich school of psychologists is so sure of the necessity of religion that, whatever their views about its objective truth, they try to stimulate the beliefs of their pathological patients, because they find them necessary for healing processes! Jung plainly sees that disbelief in Christianity would cause moral anarchy in the world if it became prevalent. He writes:

'At a time when a large part of mankind is beginning to discard Christianity, it is worth while to understand clearly why it was originally accepted. It was accepted in order to escape at last from the brutality of antiquity. As soon as we discard it, licentiousness returns, as is impressively exemplified by life in our large modern cities. . . . He who is repelled by the historical weakness of the Christian dogmatism . . . is certainly confronted with the ancient problem of licentiousness. . . . I think belief must be replaced by understanding.'² But the 'understanding' (while, in the context of this particular passage, quite a noble one) implied in Jung's psychological system is such that few psychologists would accept it even if they found it intelligible.

That something must be found to replace God, if God be dismissed, is clear to the nobler psychologists, but what it

¹ Tansley, *New Psychology*, p. 161.

² Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, pp. 142, 143 (English trans.).

is none of them can say in any clear and apprehensible manner. Perhaps their efforts will prove to be like those of the bees of the fable, who undertook to build a hive of a novel shape, and, after many failures, one bee constructed a hive of an original shape. It was only after a time that it occurred to them that in their experiments they had forgotten the shape of the old hive, and unconsciously returned to it. In that fable lies one of the hopes of the religious world. Now, this is my claim—that psychology as psychology gives no reasons either for accepting or rejecting God ; that it is ‘rationalization’ to suggest from its findings that it does. Conclusions that all human experiences can be explained without God are built up on the assumption or hypothesis that they can be explained without God, and are arguments in a circle. Even when plausible arguments can be constructed for God’s non-existence, they cannot be found in ascertained psychological facts.

This view, we suppose, would be met with the counter-argument that no proof of God can be deduced psychologically from the known facts of mental, including religious, experience. In the sense of demonstrative proof, that argument must be admitted so far as external observation of mental facts goes. But there is a value for the individual in his personal experience which remains, as we hope to show, which is not disturbed by the external examination of it. At the moment it is enough to claim that belief in God fits as well with observed psychological facts as disbelief, and to ask why, except on the ground of theophobia, such belief should be discarded.

The question of the demonstrable objective truth of religion is likely to be settled, if ever settled, on grounds other than psychological. A mathematical proof of God—or, at all events, of a personal God—is hardly conceivable. What tests, then, have we except practical ones? Is it mere ‘rationalization’ to argue that in matters in which mathematical demonstration is uncertain—and religious

faith has no meaning in a realm of mathematical certainties—that our best guidance is the pragmatists' standards? Words like those quoted above from Jung give men food for thought. A religion which works when practised, which Jung and most other psychologists would acknowledge to be *subjectively* true, cannot and ought not to be rejected by any man who is even conscious of 'the ethical self' on any grounds except those of its demonstrated falsity.

Such grounds are not available. But there are grounds, in the positive assurance of millions of men of the objective validity of their religious experiences, which support the claims of religion. It must never be forgotten that the witness to a positive experience has a value for truth that testimony to its absence cannot have. It is not a good argument that a thing does not exist because we don't happen to see it. The *prima facie* assumption that the objective experience of religion to which many Christians have given testimony is true, because it works, is confirmed by the Zurich School and psychologists like Tansley, who find that God is a necessity to the human race. And, as the people in possession, we would make certain challenges to those who wish to dispossess us. If the professional psychologist, although personally ignorant or poorly informed of Christianity, challenges the validity of a Christian's experience, why should not a Christian experient, though an amateur in psychology, challenge the non-Christian psychological criticism? The following propositions seem to be reasonable conclusions from the general discussions of experience in Part I. and from those of the present chapter :

1. *Our first proposition is that psychologists, when they deal with religion, should state whether they regard psychology as an empirical science or as something else.*

The Christian religion can be supported or criticized from many points of view, but it is confusing to deal with attacks

on it by psychologists, professedly psychological but really derived from foreign sources, though credited to psychology.

2. *The claim that psychological examination of religious experience is fully empirical must be challenged unless the psychologist makes experiments in religion.*

It is generally admitted by psychologists that introspection is the principal method for acquiring psychological knowledge. Can it be asserted that psychological knowledge collected from statements of other men's experience is empirical, or even that the examination of the behaviour of the experient is? 'By objective truth,' says Tansley, 'is meant the kind of knowledge recognized by all normal minds as valid when all *the relevant facts* are appreciated.'¹ Can all the relevant facts of religious experience ever be appreciated by non-experients? Can the non-experient of Christianity, *who has never tried to experience it*, be said to have used all the avenues available to knowledge? Is he really acquainted with the relevant facts?

It has been shown² that deep experiences are almost impossible to put into words. How can an external observer suppose he really knows the content of those experiences when he deliberately shuts the doors on experiment? In such a matter, the method by which experients entered into their religious experiences, and the examination of such methods, not merely by external and second-hand inquiry, but by experiment, seems necessary if the claim empirical is to be maintained. If after experiment no results were obtainable, religious tests as well as psychological might be applied to discover whether the conditions of experience had been complied with. It is clear, for instance, that nothing would happen to a psychologist who experimented in religion merely for the sake of psychology. Religious experience is enjoyed by quite normal people, and suggestions that it is pathological need not be discussed. Dr. Alfred

¹ Tansley, *The New Psychology*, p. 217. ² See p. 31 f.

Caldecott, when he examined for psychological purposes the lives of a large number of Methodist preachers of the eighteenth century, was particularly struck with the normality. 'These young men,' he writes, 'although they describe unusually intense emotionality, were not of ill-balanced nervous systems.'¹ It must be claimed that, whatever value the psychology of religious experience has, its value is not empirical when written about by men who have made no experiment. The psychologist who has never experimented in religion must be reminded that he has 'avoided an important avenue to knowledge.' May there not be truth in the saying of Jesus, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see [can have no conception of the meaning of] the Kingdom of God'?

3. *No account of religious experiences can be considered satisfactory which does not satisfy religious experients.*

If religious experients are normal people, whose lives are unified by their experience and whose works manifest its truth, has not their judgement of the meaning of it as much scientific value as that of men whose knowledge of such experience is purely external? Psychologists give their accounts of religious experience, but to experients they appear at best such accounts as an outsider would give. They feel that the world of the Spirit in which they live is a world in which their critics have never moved. The non-Christian psychologist who describes the experient's inner life seems to them similar to a blind man describing colour. Sometimes such thinkers are clever men, and they find their way like a blind man led by a dog, and their observations are as admirable as *tours de force* as the needlework which one has sometimes seen a blind woman accomplish. But they do not see, and it is perfectly obvious to every experient of religion that they do not see. That their description of the inner life of a Christian man

¹ Caldecott, *The Religious Sentiment*, p. 1.

is considered good by other men who are blind means that it is good for a blind man, but for the man who sees it is only pathetic. When the psychologist can give an account to an honest and truth-seeking Christian experient—and there are thousands of them—which the experient will acknowledge to be a true picture of his own religious life, his account will be credible, but not before. When such an account is given, if ever given, it will be written, we think, not by the experientially blind psychologist, but by one who, like the man in the Gospels, said, ‘Whereas I was blind, now I see.’

4. *The theory that all persons claiming to have religious experience are subjects of hallucination is on every ground highly improbable.*

Whatever euphemisms be used, the religious experient is really the subject of hallucination if his claim of touch with objective reality is ill-founded. And the psycho-analytical view—that a subjective idea coming from the fore-conscious has the value of an objective fact—makes no difference. It only uses a politer dialect to describe what cruder sceptics used to call ‘illusions.’ If what is object to the consciousness of a man be nothing of the kind, but only an echo of his own desires, or a part of himself, to that extent he is a deluded person. The *a priori* unlikeliness of this is so great that only the most conclusive arguments could carry conviction of its truth. It means that the best and wisest men in the history of the world have mistaken the meaning of their own experiences. It would mean, so far as practical results can show, up to the present even, that it is better for the world that men should be deceived than they should not. The world’s great men have taken their so-called hallucinations very seriously. If they had known that the objects of their worship were images of their own subjective sub-conscious cerebration, such men would have lost their motive-power. Socrates, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, to mention

a few, would have done nothing in the world. The knowledge that the objects of their experience were not objects would obviously have paralysed their action. It may matter little to such psychologists as see no purpose in life that this should be the case. But to any one who on any grounds believes in God, and even in progress, a scheme of life which is developed through the delusions of the highest souls is inherently improbable.

5. *Psychology, like every other human thing, must reckon with Jesus.*

The experience of Jesus has not been explained on any theory yet propounded. His unruffled consciousness of the heavenly Father ; His continuous communion with God ; His self-evidencing intuition of truth, belong to a sphere of existence entirely foreign to that of Freud or Jung, Adler or the Behaviourists, Leuba or Tansley. Berguer applied psycho-analysis to a study of Jesus, not without some illuminating remarks on introversion and extraversion, but, on the whole, his book, *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, carried little conviction, and its application of sex-imagery once or twice—as, for instance, in relation to the descending dove—is repellent. Jung, of course, says illuminating things about Jesus, but they lack historical background. No serious attempt has been made to treat the subject, nor is likely to be effective if made. But if Jesus rises above these psychological categories, what was He? We know the answers of the Church. He was very God of very God. If he was human, and only human, what have the psychologists to say? The evangelical experience has often been attacked, but never more subtly than by the modern psychological challenge. Is there anything in the challenge it need fear? Nothing! Men like Paul, Luther, Wesley, cannot be explained away. Paul's experience of God in Christ did much to change the history of the world ; that experience which has been continuously reverified

in the lives of Christian people for nearly two thousand years. It works, when tried, to-day as well as ever. The storms beat upon it, but it is like a house founded on a rock. Therefore let us lift up our hearts unto the Lord, and, being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

NOTES

I. PASTORAL EPISTLES

PAUL's authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is generally rejected by the Germans—Deissmann, however, seems uncertain—and by some distinguished British scholars. It is difficult, however, to believe that a forger lived in the early Church clever enough to have written the second letter to Timothy. The reference to the Apostle's winter cloak, the house of Carpus, the parchments, and the many autobiographical touches can hardly be from another hand than Paul. Some writers think it embodies a genuine letter from Paul to Timothy, touched up by another pen at a later date, for purposes of edification, because they are of the opinion that the ecclesiastical organization implied in this epistle is of a later date than can have existed in the lifetime of Paul. Similar objections, but with more force, have led to the conclusion that the letters to Timothy and Titus are not Pauline. It must be admitted that any one who reads through the Epistles of Paul at a sitting is likely when he comes to the Pastorals to be sensitive to a difference in tone and subject matter. An English reader can test this statement by reading through such a translation as that of A. S. Way, but, before the Pauline authorship of these little letters is rejected, it is reasonable to bear in mind the bias of those who have challenged it. The 'Liberal Christian School' assumes that Church organization followed a slow process of development, and their theory of ecclesiastical evolution demands a late date. It is legitimate to question how far this theory is scientifically deduced from the known facts of first-century Church organization, and how far from modern ideas and left-wing anti-ecclesiasticism. It is quite true that a date for these letters as early as Paul's lifetime does not harmonize very happily with some of the ecclesiastical theories and prejudices of the modern liberal school of critics. While Paul may not, admittedly, have written 1 Timothy and Titus (though his own work can hardly be denied in 2 Timothy) it is not impossible that he did. After all, if he did write the Pastorals, he must have been some years older than when, in writing to Philemon, he called himself Paul the Aged. The objection that he enjoined on Timothy to 'guard the deposit' and like objections, on the ground that these expressions

are not 'in the manner of Paul of other days' (but compare 2 Corinthians ii. 2), loses its force when we remember the tendency of old men to become conservative. Paul was a very human being, and, after his hard life, may have been subject to the normal infirmities of old age. It is by no means absurd to believe that he was interested in the ecclesiastical projects of his protégé, and that so obviously effective an ecclesiastical organizer as he should have cared about the development of ecclesiastical discipline in Churches which had outgrown their first missionary impulse. Parallels can be found in the methods of other missionary ecclesiastics, for instance, John Wesley, neither is it an insuperable objection to his authorship that letters, written in his old age, should lack the ardour of his prime. For our purpose of examining his experience we need not press the Pauline authorship of these letters, except for autobiographical details, especially in 2 Timothy, which English scholars, at all events, are not generally prepared to reject, even when they suspect the Pauline authorship of the letters in their present form.

2. CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE

The early date for the Epistle to the Galatians, adopted in the text, is that arrived at by Kirsopp Lake in his *Early Epistles of Paul*. Dr. Lake's conclusions on historical grounds are very confident and entirely convincing. It is true that he somewhat qualifies his conclusions by admitting that there is a literary argument in favour of a later date. The similarity of the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians seems to convince some literary minds that they must have been written at about the same time, and the date of them might be as late as A.D. 59. Perhaps one may be permitted to say that this argument appeals very much more to an academic than to a missionary mentality. Paul, however, it must not be forgotten, was primarily a mission preacher and not a maker of books, and that he should have given vehement expression of his teachings in a letter, of which he probably kept no copy, and, ten years afterwards, have used similar material in a reasoned discourse, does not seem at all unlikely to a practical missionary preacher who, quite naturally, repeats his distinctive teaching to varying congregations at varying times. That such teaching should be expressed in identical phraseology is quite likely. There is nothing easier than the repetition of formulas arrived at in the course of repeated teaching of the same truth. That Paul continued to be interested in the great truths taught in his epistles until the end of his life, is evident from his writings in the Epistle to the Philippians. The literary man who

apologizes for repetitions and is influenced by literary canons of taste and judgement, is thinking from an entirely different standpoint from that of the fervent missionary who has a great message to proclaim. Hence, the literary argument from Paul's standpoint does not seem to a missionary preacher necessarily to invalidate the conclusions to which Kirsopp Lake and others have come from their analysis of the historical facts.

3. TANSLEY'S PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITION

AFFECT. The general term for the psychical phenomenon which becomes conscious as feeling and emotion : one of the three aspects of the 'complete mental process.' Concretely, 'an affect' is the basis of a particular feeling or emotion.

COGNITION. The general term for the mental process by which the mind knows or takes cognizance of anything : one of the three aspects of the 'complete mental process.' Concretely, 'a cognition' is the act of taking cognizance of something.

CONATION. The general term for mental set or tendency to action : one of the three aspects of the 'complete mental process.' Concretely, 'a conation' is the mental tendency or striving to do something.

4. EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Since the Epistle to the Colossians has been accepted as genuine, the argument has been developed that the Epistle to the Ephesians is a later treatment of its material for different purposes by another hand. The reasons given for this view do not seem overwhelming. Much more convincing arguments are necessary to make credible the psychological unlikelihood of any other man having written this very Pauline book—this masterpiece of a still developing mind. What a crop of anonymous geniuses there must have been at that time, but how curious it is that the only men worth reading are those who wrote under the well-known names of apostles, whereas such as wrote under their own names—Clement, Ignatius, &c., have really nothing to say of first-rate value?

Whether this letter was written specifically to the Ephesians or the Colossians is another matter. The arguments that it was an encyclical letter seem strongly supported by its contents.

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